

## DO STATEWIDE VIRTUAL SCHOOLS VIOLATE WISCONSIN LAWS?

### Introduction:

In Wisconsin, distance education or Statewide Virtual Schools (SVS) and Statewide Virtual Charter Schools (SVCS) are only a few years old. The first school "opened its doors" in September 2002. After the first several years it is appropriate to evaluate the performance of the new education modality in Wisconsin. Information about the schools is now available and has been included with this report for the reader's convenience. Are the schools complying with Wisconsin statutes? To date only two narrowly defined court cases have been filed by Wisconsin Education Association Council (WEAC.) Neither side appealed the court cases. It is the author's opinion after reviewing the statutes and the publicly available materials that the schools are violating several current Wisconsin statutes in three primary areas:

1. Statewide Virtual Charter Schools violate charter school statutes because the schools are physically located outside the school district and the schools result in the conversion of private sectarian schools into charter schools.
2. Statewide Virtual Schools targeted-recruitment methods violate the anti-discrimination statutes because they targeted educational minorities. The Statewide Virtual Schools violate the state constitution provision that school districts be "as nearly uniform as practicable."
3. Statewide Virtual Schools have applied regulations and rules that are appropriate in the neutral setting of a school building but are inappropriate in the students home where learning takes place.

### Background:

Three new educational trends are converging in Wisconsin to create "virtual schools." The first trend is "charter schools." Charter schools are created or chartered by a public school district and are exempt from many of the regulations that govern public schools. (A1) The second trend is "Open Enrollment." Open enrollment allows public school students to enroll in a public school outside the student's resident district. (A5, B1) The third trend is that more students are completing their formal studies at home using a computer-based program or taught by their parents. These educational trends are redefining, changing and expanding how terms like enroll, attend, instruct, teacher, school, school district, and public school are viewed and applied.

These three trends have converged to give rise to Statewide Virtual Schools (SVS) and Statewide Virtual Charter Schools (SVCS.) The common features of Statewide Virtual Schools are the following:

1. The students learn in a home or other location provided by the parent or guardian outside the school district. This student is a "public school student at home"

2. The parent, "home-teacher" or "learning coach" used by the non-resident school district receives no compensation from the school district or any third party.
3. The students enroll in a public school under the open enrollment law.
4. The non-resident school is either chartered under code section 118.40 or is a traditional public school.

Since 2002 several school districts have aggressively recruited the 2% of Wisconsin students who were homeschooled to join the SVS via open enrollment. For example, a student may live in and reside in the Madison school district while they are enrolled in the Appleton School District 100 miles away. (G2) The students learn at home using a curriculum provided by the public school. The curriculum is either accessed via the internet or is mailed to the student along with a year's worth of school supplies. Young elementary students spend about 20% of their time on the computer. High-schoolers spend approximately 80% of their time on the computer. (C1) The curricula used by the statewide schools are generally a graded software curriculum with online tests and supplemented with textbooks.

Generally, a parent or guardian called a "learning coach" (D1) oversees and assists the student on an hour-to-hour and day-to-day basis. A condition of enrollment is that a parent, guardian, home-teacher or other adult learning coach be available to supervise and monitor the student. (E1) The older students require less parental oversight. The certified teacher paid by the school district monitors the student's online progress and checks in with the parent and student on a bi-weekly basis via e-mail or by phone. (F3, G2) The vast majority of the online work is text based or video based. Very few of the courses or total "class time" are live synchronis sessions where the students interact with each other and the teacher in real time. One statewide school enrolled students from 150 different Wisconsin school districts. Student enrollment has doubled every year since 2002 in the statewide schools. (I2) There are 13 virtual schools in Wisconsin. (I1) In the school year 2004/2005 there are approximately 2,000 students in grades K-12 enrolled in three largest schools, Wisconsin Connections Academy (Appleton with 500 students (I2) uses Calvert for K-8 grades) Wisconsin Virtual Academy (Northern Ozaukee with 750 students (G3, J2) uses K12 for K-8 grades) IQ Academy (Waukesha with 650 students (G3, I2) uses KCDistance Learning or Keystone National Highschool for 9-12 grade).

### **The Enrollment Process:**

In January and February the school districts recruit students statewide to open enroll. The recruitment includes direct mail, telemarketing, and informational sessions across the state, print, radio, and television press releases and interviews. (K1) To enroll in a school via Open Enrollment the parent/guardian must give a completed form PI-9410 to the non-resident school district during the three-week open enrollment period in February. If both the resident and non-resident district agree the student may attend the non-resident school the following school year (WI Public Law 118.51 (3)) (B2).

## **Statewide Virtual Charter Schools Violate Charter School Laws**

### **Charter School Statute 118.40(3)**

The Charter School Statute includes the following prohibition 118.40(3):

"A school board may not enter into a contract for the establishment of a charter school located outside the school district, except that if 2 or more school boards enter into an agreement under s. 66.0301 to establish a charter school, the charter school shall be located within one of the school districts, and if one or more school boards enter into an agreement with the board of control of a cooperative educational service agency to establish a charter school, the charter school shall be located within the boundaries of the cooperative educational service agency. A school board may not enter into a contract that would result in the conversion of a private, sectarian school to a charter school."

### **The Virtual Charter School is Located outside the Charting School District Violating their Charter**

- The word "school" is not defined in Wisconsin statutes and the general usage defines a school as a place of learning where formalized education occurs on a regular and recurring basis under the guidance of an instructor.
- The only space dedicated to the school district is 1,500 square feet for administrative services because the district "will not require a physical facility for day-to-day learning." (H11, H13)
- The SVCS say the students "do their learning at home" (A1) under the "daily, personalized involvement" (D1) of their parent or guardian.
- "A parent must be available to be at home with the child to provide instruction." (E1)
- Parents will spend about 3 hours per day . . . directly teaching students." (C1)
- The student is "primarily...taught at home by their parents under the electronic supervision of a teacher."
- High school parents are required to assess and head off problems "before they turn into bigger problems" (A3)
- The interaction between student and adult is taking place in the home. The home is outside the school district.
- The web based server is located out of state at the curriculum provider's facility.

- The “certified teacher” does not live or work in the chartering school district because, “any location with an internet connection will work.” (F3, H13, L2)
- The ‘certified teacher’ interacts acts with the student 15 minute every two week. (F3)
- The school under the compulsory attendance laws for a Home-Based-Private-Education (or homeschool) is the student’s home then the home is a place of learning where formalized education occurs on a regular and recurring basis under the guidance of an adult.
- After a year of homeschooling the same student using the same curriculum with the same adult accessing a “qualified teacher” paid by a school district instead of “curriculum specialist paid by the parent is attending the same school. (G2, M1, M2, N1, O1) Both statutes must use the same definition of a school.

**Therefore the school is located outside the school district violating Wisconsin statute 118.40(3)**

**The Chartering School Board's Actions Result in the Conversion of a Private, Sectarian School into a Public Charter School.**

- The Charter School Statute 118.40(3) states, “A school board may not enter into a contract that would result in the conversion of a private, sectarian school to a charter school.”
- The “administrator of a home-based private educational program” submits “a statement” to the Department of Public Instruction that “(a) the primary purpose of the program is to provide private or religious based education. (b) The program is privately controlled. (c) The program provides at least 875 hours of instruction each school year. (d) The program provides a sequentially progressive curriculum of fundamental instruction in reading, language arts, mathematics, social studies, science and health.” (DPI form 1206)
- A private school program is defined as a program with “(a) the primary purpose of the program is to provide private or religious based education. (b) The program is privately controlled. (c) The program provides at least 875 hours of instruction each school year. (d) The program provides a sequentially progressive curriculum of fundamental instruction in reading, language arts, mathematics, social studies, science and health.” Statute 118.16(1)
- By legal definition a home-based private educational program is a private school.
- The majority of the “home-based private education” programs are operated for religious reasons. (P1, P2)

- A student attending a religious home homes-based private educated program one year starts attending a SVCS the following year.
- A Wisconsin homeschooler using K12 or Calvert curriculum receives e-mails on behalf of the SVCS encouraging the student to sign up with the SVCS in order to receive the curriculum free and use of a computer and internet connection stipend. (G2, M1, M2, N1, O1)
- The student is using the same curriculum, the same adult instructor overseeing the "day-to-day learning, in the same location both years. (G2, M1, M2, N1, O1)
- Half of the new SVCS students were previously homeschooled the prior year. (L1, Note 3)

**Therefore the school board's and the curriculum vendors' actions resulted in the conversion of a private, sectarian school into a charter school in violation of the charter school statute 118.40(3)**

## **Statewide Virtual School Recruitment Methods are Discriminatory**

**Statute: 118.13(1)**

"No person may be denied admission to any public school or be denied participation in, be denied the benefits of or be discriminated against in any curricular, extracurricular, pupil services, recreational or other program or activity because of the person's sex, race religion, national origin, ancestry, creed, pregnancy, marital or parental status, sexual orientation or physical, mental emotional or learning disability."

**Statute: 118.40(4)**

"Charter School ... Restrictions... (b) Restrictions. A charter school may not do any of the following: 1) Charge tuition. 2)Discriminate in admission or deny participation in any program or activity on the basis of a person's sex, race, religion, national origin, ancestry, pregnancy, marital or parental status, sexual orientation or physical, mental emotional or learning disability."

**The very nature of targeted marketing used by the SVS is discriminatory. It is discriminatory in admissions and on the basis of race, religion, pregnancy, marital or parental status and denies participation to public school students because the same "invitation" to open enroll is not being extended equally to all public school students. Multiple invitations to open enroll were sent to the 2% of students who were homeschooled but not to public school students.**

- Both charter and traditional schools are prohibited from discriminating on the basis of a person's sex, race, religion, national origin, ancestry, creed, pregnancy, marital or parental status.

- Discrimination is defined in administrative rule as PI9.02 “any action, policy or practice, including bias, stereotyping...and differentiates or distinguishes among persons, or which limits or denies a person or group of persons opportunities, privileges, roles or rewards based, in whole or in part, on sex, race, religion, national origin, ancestry, creed, pregnancy, marital or parental status.” Clearly the majority of public schools students were not receiving the same opportunities to open enroll that non-public school students received.
- The schools are spending \$125,000-300,000 on targeted marketing. (K2, V1, X2)
- A majority of the SVS marketing budget is directed to the 2% of students who home school, have intentionally opted out of the public school system and are annually required to register with the Department of Public Instruction. (P3, DPI form 1206)
- Former homeschoolers make up half of all SVS students (L1, Note 3)
- The express intent of the targeted marketing is to bring “homeschoolers back into the public schools.” (F2, H5)
- School District Superintendents are sending letters to homechooling parents. (Q1)
- Targeted marketing techniques such as direct mail and telemarketing are directed disproportional to educational minorities, specific religious, marital or selected parental status groups. (Note 6)
- The mailing lists were drawn from the 2% of homeschooling students who are required by law to file annually with the state they did not desire to be part of the public school system and are not a representative cross-section of public school students who are already attending public schools. (Note 6) While avoiding direct marketing students already in the public school system.
- The typical homeschooling family receives multiple solicitations while public school students have rarely received the direct mail or phone calls. (Note 4 & 5)
- Assuming Wisconsin demographics mirrors the US demographics the targeted marketing was disproportion ally targeted to
 

	Targeted Demographics Reference	vs.	State Demographics	
• Minority	6%	vs.	33%	(R7)
• Unmarried Parent	3%	vs.	28%	(R7)
• More than 3 children	62%	vs.	20%	(R7)
• Stay at home Mother	86%	vs.	30%	(R12)
• Median Household Income \$52,000		vs.	\$31,000	(R9)

- 83% of the homeschooling mothers religious affiliation ascribe to the "Apostle's Creed" but only 20% of the general population attends religious services that ascribe to the "apostle's Creed. (R8, R9)
- Half of students who enroll in SCS were formerly homeschooled but homeschoolers account for only 2% of the total statewide student population. (Note 3, P1)

Therefore the Statewide Virtual Schools marketing methods are discriminatory in violation of statute section 118.13(1) and 118.40(4). The direct marketing effort to homeschoolers disproportionately targeted only 2% of all Wisconsin students. The targeted marketing discriminates against public school students. It is discriminatory in admission on the basis of race, religion, creed, pregnancy, marital and parental status and effectively denies the same opportunity and invitations to public school students.

## **Statewide Virtual Schools Change the School District Usurping the Legislature's Role**

### **The State Constitution Article X Section 3**

"The legislature shall provide by law for the establishment of district schools, which shall be as nearly uniform as practicable;"

**School districts supervisors are usurping or superseding the legislature's responsibility to establish and maintain school districts as nearly uniform as practical.**

- Statewide only 2% of Wisconsin students are homeschooled but a disproportion of former homeschool school students are enrolling in selected school districts. (P1)
- Homeschoolers are not representative of Wisconsin's student population because they are more religious, are more likely to be married, and have more children than the general public. (R7, R8, R9, R12)
- SVS schools draw most of students from outside school district (G2, I2, and F2)
- "There is nothing in state law that prevents a public school district from operating a virtual school" there is nothing that prevents school districts from remaking the school district as established by the legislature. (G3)
- A school district, through targeted marketing to self selected demographics, can increase the student population by 70% in two years from 850 to 1,459 students. (J2)

Therefore school district supervisors are redistricting their school districts through targeted marketing and open enrollment in violation of the state constitution Article X section 3. School districts are increasing their size by 70% usurping and superseding the legislature's responsibility to establish and maintain school districts as nearly uniform as practical.

## **Regulations for School Buildings are Applied Incorrectly in the Homes of Students**

### **The State Constitution Article I Section 25**

"The people have the right to keep and bear arms for security, defense, hunting, recreation or any other lawful purpose."

**School Districts are treating the student's home as a school building in violation of the state constitution.**

- "Violations that may lead to expulsion include ...possession of firearms," and "dangerous weapons" (H9)
- A hunting rifle with a gun lock in a gun safe in the den where the computer is located is grounds for expulsion or suspension.
- What does suspension or expulsion look like in a SVS? Is the student suspended from his home?

**Statewide Virtual School have applied regulations and rules that are appropriate in the neutral setting of a school building but are inappropriate in the students home where learning takes place.**

### **Conclusion**

As practiced in Wisconsin, the Statewide Virtual Schools violate Wisconsin statutes. Current law should be enforced. Statewide Virtual Charter Schools violate Wisconsin statutes because the schools are physically located outside the school district and the schools resulted in the conversion of private sectarian schools into charter schools in direct violation of the charter statute. The selective and targeted recruitment methods used by Statewide Virtual Schools violate the anti-discrimination statutes. School districts are usurping the legislature's responsibility set out in the state constitution that school districts be "as nearly uniform as practicable." School districts are increasing their size by 70%.

Currently Wisconsin statutes are being ignored. The perpetrators of these violations, the chartering school district and curriculum vendors are receiving their compensation. The residential school district that is "loosing students" is rewarded with additional funding under the school funding formula as long as the students enrolling were formerly private school or homeschool student. This is a result of the school funding formula that rewards



low-cost or efficient school districts. The Department of Public Instruction with its limited resources has higher enforcement and legislative objectives than addressing the SVS. The public school parents hear or see the SVS in the media but don't realize the multiple invitations to open enroll are being targeted at the 2% of students who are homeschooled.

The author inquired of a legislative aid that supported the SVCS how a charter school can be located outside the sponsoring district. The author was told "because we can." The lack of an honest review of the legal statutes is what prompted this report. Why is the educational branch of government allowed to ignore the laws passed by the state legislature? Why aren't Wisconsin's educational laws being enforced?

## Notes

### Definitions

A "Private school" student is a student that attends an institution as defined in the private school statute 118.165.

Sec. 118.165 (1) "An institution is a private school if its educational program meets all of the following criteria: (a) the primary purpose of the program is to provide private or religious based education. (b) The program is privately controlled. (c) The program provides at least 875 hours of instruction each school year. (d) The program provides a sequentially progressive curriculum of fundamental instruction in reading, language arts, mathematics, social studies, science and health. This subsection does not require the program to include in its curriculum any concept, topic or practice in conflict with the program's religious doctrines or to exclude from its curriculum any concept, topic or practice consistent with the program's religious doctrines. (e) The program is not operated or instituted for the purpose of avoiding or circumventing the compulsory school attendance requirement under s.118.15(1)(a). (f) The pupils in the institution's educational program, in the ordinary course of events, return annually to the homes of their parents or guardians for not less than 2 months of summer vacation or the institution is licensed as a child welfare agency under s. 48.60(1)"

A "Home Schooled" student is a student taught at home by a "Child's parent or guardian or by a person designated by the parent" and enrolled in a "Home-based private educational program" under section 115.001(30) who has properly filed form PI-1206 with the Department of Public Instruction.

The parent or guardian of every homeschooled child must complete form PI-1206 stating the following is true: "Section 115.30(3) the administration of each home-based private educational program shall indicate in his or her report whether the system or program meets all of the criteria under s. 118.165(1). Section 118.165(1) an institution is a private school if its educational program meets all of the following criteria: (a) The primary purpose of the program is to provide private or religious based education. (b) The program is privately controlled. (c) The program provides at least 875 hours of instruction each school year. (d) The program provides a sequentially progressive curriculum of fundamental instruction in reading, language arts, mathematics, social studies, science and health. This subsection does not require the program to include in its curriculum any concept, topic or practice in conflict with the program's religious doctrines or to exclude from its curriculum any concept, topic or practice consistent with the program's religious doctrines. (e) The program is not operated or instituted for the purpose of avoiding or circumventing the compulsory school attendance requirement under s.118.15(1)(a)."

Note 3 The Appleton's School District Superintendent testified on May 20, 2002 at the "Wisconsin Assembly Public Hearing on Virtual Schools" that 50% of the Wisconsin

Connections Academy students were homeschooled the year before attending Wisconsin Connections Academy.

Note 4 Also at the May 20, 2002 hearing one homeschooling family reported receiving a dozen solicitations to open enroll.

Note 5 In the four years researching SVS the author has only learned of one public school family receiving a direct mail piece for SVS. All other recipients were either currently homeschooling or had homeschooled at least one child in the previous year.

Note 6 In February 2002 at the Madison informational session for K12 the company representative said that three mailing lists were rented for the mailing. The first was rented from Karen Andreola a homeschooling author. The second list contained individuals who had purchased homeschool "educational products." The third list was undisclosed but when pressed admitted it would have virtually no public school students on the list.


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## Frequently Asked Questions



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### FAQs: Home Schooling

**Is iQ Academies the same as home schooling?**

Students enrolled in iQ Academies at Wisconsin do their learning at home, but they are participating in a charter public high school that is part of the School District of Waukesha. The curriculum is approved by the School District of Waukesha for earning high school credits that can lead to a High School Diploma through iQ Academies and the School District of Waukesha.

**What kind of diploma will my child receive after completing iQ Academies?**

Students who complete all the School District of Waukesha requirements for graduation will receive a High School Diploma from the School District of Waukesha.

**My child has been doing regular home school up until now. He will be in 11th grade next year and we want him to graduate on time. How will iQ Academies count his work done while in home school?**

Because every home school curriculum can be different, we will need to review any documentation you have of your child's high school work so we can compare it against the requirements of the School District of Waukesha. **Contact us** by phone or email for more information.

A1

**Are there other home school families I can talk with about their experience with iQ Academies?**

Yes, if you contact us by email or by phone, we can provide you with contact information for other home school families in Wisconsin who are willing to discuss their experiences with prospective students.

**My child has an IEP and has been enrolled in Special Education in our home school district. Does iQ Academies enroll students with special needs?**

Yes, as a public high school, iQ Academies at Wisconsin accepts students with disabilities. The main issue to be considered is whether or not the independent nature of online instruction will be the best fit for a student. Staff from the School District of Waukesha and iQ Academies will discuss your child's situation with you. You may contact us by phone for more information.

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## **FAQs: The Online Learning Environment**

**We don't have a very good computer at home. Can my child participate in iQ Academies at Wisconsin?**

Yes! Every iQ Academies student receives a state-of-the-art laptop computer and a printer to use while participating in the iQ Academies program.

**Do we have to have High Speed Internet Access to participate in iQ Academies at Wisconsin?**

High speed Internet access definitely makes the experience of learning online much more satisfying, but it is not absolutely necessary. Some areas of Wisconsin unfortunately do not have high-speed access available yet. For those areas that have high-speed access available, however, it is definitely the preferred type of internet access for the program. The monthly internet stipend (\$20.00 per month paid quarterly) helps to defray the higher cost of high-speed access.

**What kinds of safeguards are in place to keep my child safe while working on the internet?**

The main content of all of the iQ Academies courses is available directly through our secure, online student classroom area. In some cases, links provided by teachers direct students to other websites so students can take advantage of the wealth of educational information available online. In addition to limiting the sites to which students must visit to do their coursework, we have added a piece of software on all student laptop computers that filters out sites that are not

appropriate for high school-aged children to view. Beyond that, good parental supervision and setting some guidelines for internet use that match with your family values will go a long way in protecting your children from unwanted information on the internet.

**Do I have to be at home all the time my child is doing schoolwork?**

This is not required, however it is important for your child to know that you are interested in how he/she is doing in school. It is unrealistic for most high school aged students to handle the total responsibility of an online learning environment without any parental intervention. The iQ Academies program does not require students to do all of their coursework during the traditional school hours, so it may be beneficial for some families to schedule at least some of their "school time" during hours that parents are home to provide support.

**How do I know whether or not my child would be successful doing online learning?**

There is no test to take that can answer this question. Some of the qualities that we have seen in our most successful students are:

- The ability to work independently.
- A willingness to seek out answers to their questions, or to move on to a different subject until the necessary help is available.
- The willingness to ask for help when needed. There are many opportunities to get help from teachers, from other students, or from technical support. Students have to be willing to make use of those resources and let someone know if they don't understand something.
- Some internal motivation to succeed in the program. Students who are forced into an online learning environment will be less likely to be successful.

**There are some things that you can do as a parent/guardian to help your child to be successful in iQ Academies at Wisconsin:**

- Help them set up a schedule for school to follow every day. Students should plan on approximately one hour of work per day for every class they are enrolled in, plus some extra time for outside readings or writing papers.
- Provide an area for them to work that has limited distractions and where their materials are available to them.
- Encourage them to discuss their work with you. These discussions can give you clues as to whether they understand the materials and the assignments, and potential problems can be headed off before they turn into bigger problems.

**Our family travels quite a bit. Would that be a problem in the iQ Academies program?**

As long as internet access is available, students can log into iQ Academies and to their courses. For trips during which internet access may not be available, students can print off their assignments ahead of time and work from those in order to keep up with their work. Students should notify their teachers by email if they will be unable to access the Internet for a period of time.

**Will my child ever meet their iQ Academies classmates?**

We have a crew of "Community Coordinators" who schedule activities that students can choose to participate in with other iQ students in their area. Students also have a chance to get together with classmates at regional meetings that are scheduled a few times during the school year. These meetings are not required of students, but do provide an opportunity for students to put names with faces and get to know their classmates a little better.

**What tools are available for students to communicate with each other?**

We have a feature on our secure, online student classroom area, **Blackboard**, that allows students to participate in discussion boards with other iQ Academies students. Topics of discussion may include music, books, movies, politics, sports, etc. These discussion boards are monitored by iQ Academies staff and provide a great way for students to talk about their talents and interests.

**What role do the teachers play in iQ Academies at Wisconsin?**

The teachers play an important role in the iQ Academies program. It is the role of the teachers to meet individual learning needs of the students enrolled in their courses. Teachers have "office hours" and hold weekly sessions during which students can ask questions and have discussions with their teacher and classmates. Teachers are also available by phone and email, and students are encouraged to contact their teachers with questions.

**As a parent, how can I check on my son/daughter's progress in iQ Academies?**

Parents are assigned an Observer login and password to enter the iQ Academies site. By using this login, parents can go directly to their child's classes and see what assignments have been completed and what their child's grades are at all times.

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**FAQs: Enrollment**

**What happens if we complete the Open Enrollment forms in February and later change our minds about attending iQ Academies?**

The final decision about attending iQ Academies does not need to be made until June. Filing the Open Enrollment forms in February makes your child eligible for enrollment into iQ Academies, and parents have until June to make their final choice.

**Once we start the school year, can we still change our minds and go back to our home district?**

Although we work very hard to make iQ Academies a positive experience for all our students, if you feel that iQ Academies is not the best choice for your child you always have the ability to return to your local school or to regular home schooling.

**Is iQ Academies at Wisconsin a private school?**

No, iQ Academies at Wisconsin is a public high school. It is part of the School District of Waukesha.

**Are there classes or meetings in which we are required to drive to Waukesha?**

No. We recognize that iQ Academies at Wisconsin students are spread across the state of Wisconsin, so when meetings are held, we try to schedule them at locations that minimize travel for families. For example, all 10th grade students are required to complete the Wisconsin Knowledge and Concepts Examination in November of each year. In order to make this requirement easier for iQ Academies families, we hold testing sessions in several regions of the state. In addition, there are several opportunities for families and students to get together at meet and greet sessions. These are not mandatory, but are good opportunities for students to get together with their classmates and to meet iQ Academies staff and teachers.

**Is there required participation in state standardized testing?**

All 10th graders must participate in the WKCE test in the fall. In addition, iQ Academies students participate in district initiatives like the 9th and 10th grade writing assessment.

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**My child wants to participate in High School Sports. Will he/she be able to do that in iQ Academies at Wisconsin?**

While we have a great many athletes attending iQ Academies at Wisconsin, the WIAA rules do not currently allow iQ Academies students to participate in sports at their local high schools. iQ Academies is a good choice for students who participate in sports or other activities outside of school and require a more flexible schedule.

**Can my child take any classes at our local school while attending iQ Academies?**

This is an area that is at the discretion of the local school. Some iQ Academies students participate in choir or band at their local school. You would need to discuss this with your local school district.

**How do we know if iQ Academies is the right school for us?**

We invite you to contact us and learn as much as you can about what iQ Academies has to offer you and your child. Getting as much information as possible is the best way to make an informed choice.

**How much time does it take to complete a one-credit course?**

iQ Academies at Wisconsin runs on a school year calendar. Coursework should be completed by June. A one-credit course is designed to take 36 weeks or about 180 hours. As a general guideline, in addition to the time you spend online, you should also count on spending time reading textbooks, completing assignments and studying for tests and exams. Therefore, you may need to spend approximately 180 hours to complete a course. This time is a guideline and will vary according to course, study habits, etc. You should assume that a half-credit course will take half as much time as a one-credit course.

**Where can I get a course pace chart?**

Course pace charts are provided in each course. These charts will help you plan your work so that you will complete the course by the end of the school year. Pace charts are typically found in the Course Information tab.

**How will I be evaluated?**

Progress is measured through quizzes, exams, written essays, assignments, projects and semester exams.

**How do I get help from my teachers if I am having difficulty with my course(s)?**

AGA

Your teachers will provide feedback on any assignments or projects you complete. You can also contact your teacher via email or through the course message center. In addition, each teacher has regularly scheduled online office hours. During the scheduled time, students interact with the teacher and other students in a virtual classroom.

**Where do I get textbooks and how much do they cost?**

Textbooks are provided at no cost through iQ Academies as part of your public school experience. They will be sent to you at the beginning of August. At the end of the school year, you will return the textbooks to us. In some cases, textbooks may be online; some courses do not require textbooks at all.

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A QUALITY  
EDUCATION  
FOR  
**EVERY**  
CHILD



**State of Wisconsin**  
**Department of Public Instruction**  
Elizabeth Burmaster, State Superintendent

**\*\*\*\*NEWS RELEASE\*\*\*\***

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Friday, January 28, 2005

DPI 2005-10

CONTACT: Joseph Donovan, Communications Officer, (608) 266-3559

**Public school open enrollment application period is Feb. 7 to 25**

MADISON—State Superintendent Elizabeth Burmaster announced dates for open enrollment applications for the 2005-06 school year, reminding parents who wish to choose the public school district their children will attend next year to apply during the Feb. 7 to 25 application window.

"Wisconsin's open enrollment program is one of many options our state offers parents that contributes to our shared responsibility to educate our children," Burmaster said.

The February application period commences the eighth year in which Wisconsin law has permitted children to attend public school in a school district other than the one in which they live. Participation in the program continues to grow, with 15,413 students transferring to another school district during the 2003-04 school year, up from just 2,464 transfers the first year of the program.

Open Enrollment		
	Applications	New and Continuing Transfers
1998-99	5,926	2,464
1999-00	6,691	4,858
2000-01	7,616	7,213
2001-02	9,523	9,603
2002-03	11,859	12,379
2003-04	13,770	15,413
2004-05	15,367	Not Available

Under the full-time public school open enrollment program, parents must apply during the application period to the school district they wish their children to attend. Early and late applications are not accepted. Parents will be informed by April 8 whether their open enrollment applications have been approved or denied.

Transportation is the responsibility of the parent; however, some school districts may elect to provide partial transportation. Parents with questions about transportation should call both the resident and nonresident school district offices to find out if any transportation will be provided. Reimbursement of some transportation costs is available for low-income parents whose children are eligible for free or reduced-price lunches under the federal school lunch program.

(more)

The DPI provides the following guidelines for parents who wish to apply for open enrollment:

- Open enrollment deadlines are firm. Application forms must be submitted to the nonresident school district no earlier than Feb. 7 and no later than Feb. 25. Early and late applications will be returned. The forms are due in the nonresident school district no later than 4 p.m. on Feb. 25; a postmark will not meet the requirement. Hand-delivery of application forms to the nonresident school district is strongly recommended.
- Parents may submit applications to no more than three nonresident school districts for each child during the open enrollment application period. Submitting more than three applications to nonresident school districts will result in all applications being invalidated.
- Forms must be filled out completely and accurately. Contact the local school district office or the DPI if assistance is needed in filling out the form. An inaccurate or incomplete form may result in denial of an application.
- Parents may request enrollment in a specific school or program in the nonresident school district; however, enrollment in the requested school or program is subject to space and other limitations and is not guaranteed.
- Most students who attended a nonresident school district under open enrollment last year are not required to reapply for the 2005-06 school year. However, if the student will be entering middle school, junior high school, or high school in the 2005-06 school year, parents should call the nonresident school district to find out if reapplication will be required.
- Parents may apply for their children to attend 4-year-old kindergarten under open enrollment only if the resident school district also offers a 4-year-old kindergarten program for which the child is eligible.

Application forms may be obtained from any public school district, from the Department of Public Instruction, or from the DPI's open enrollment website at < <http://www.dpi.state.wi.us/dpi/dfm/sms/psctoc.html> >. More information is available from local school districts or from Mary Jo Cleaver, DPI, 888-245-2732 (toll-free), or < [maryjo.cleaver@dpi.state.wi.us](mailto:maryjo.cleaver@dpi.state.wi.us) >.

###



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K12 : K12 Homeschool : The K12 Homeschool Experience

## The K12 Homeschool Experience

Families who choose to educate their children at home with the K12® curriculum can expect to share a common experience, based on several important factors:

### Quality Curriculum and Materials

K12 provides lessons, progress and planning tools, assessments, and learning aids over the Internet, and complements this information with supplemental learning materials, such as books, workbooks, CDs, and videos.

### Parental Involvement

Parents or other caring adults are a child's primary teachers. Parents will spend about three hours over the course of a five-hour day directly teaching children; during the remaining time children will read or engage in other study activities.

### Appropriate Use of Technology

Generally, children in grades K-5 do about 20-30 percent of the work online. The rest of their time is spent reading books, solving math problems on paper, drawing, and conducting science experiments. As children get older and their reading skills improve, instruction and activities will involve increased computer use, according to educational standards.

### Elementary and Middle School Courses

K12 has programs for students from kindergarten through grade eight, so you can educate multiple students with K12. (Higher grades will be available in the coming years.) With our complete program, you can choose the appropriate grade level for each child in each subject.

### Adaptable Tools

The K12® curriculum can be tailored for children with special needs. We provide tools that allow students to work at their own pace, so K12 works for children who need extra time to master a subject, and for those who learn quickly.

► The K12 Homeschool Experience

► FAQs

► Technical Requirements

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*"Of the various programs that were researched, K12 seemed the most interactive and involving—was also rigorous."*

Rebecca Daneker  
Clawson, MI



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## Learning Triad

### INDIVIDUALIZED INSTRUCTION

#### PARENT INVOLVEMENT

ACCOUNTABILITY AND ACHIEVEMENT

HIGH-QUALITY TEACHING

TECHNOLOGY-RICH SCHOOLING

PROVEN CURRICULUM

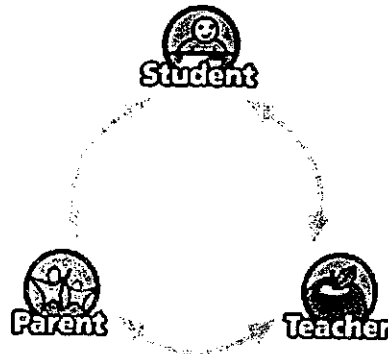
#### Learning Triad

Is this Program Right for You?

Parent Responsibilities

Community Coordinators

Connections Academy (CA) incorporates the concept of a learning triad made up of a student, a parent or other learning coach, and a teacher. It is well documented in educational research that an involved and committed adult is essential to each student's academic performance. The CA program provides this important element through the involvement of the student's parent, or another nonprofessional educator serving as the student's learning coach. Experienced, certified teachers support these individuals. (See [High-Quality Teaching](#) for more information on the role of the Connections Academy teacher.) For students, working in the learning triad provides an educational program adapted to their individual needs, learning styles and interests. For parents, this means daily, personalized involvement in their child's educational progress utilizing the unique knowledge the parent has of their child. For teachers, their professional experience, knowledge, and skills can be applied to teaching rather than to clerical tasks and the many non-educational activities required in classroom management.



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## Parent Responsibilities

INDIVIDUALIZED INSTRUCTION

**PARENT INVOLVEMENT**

ACCOUNTABILITY AND ACHIEVEMENT

HIGH-QUALITY TEACHING

TECHNOLOGY-RICH SCHOOLING

PROVEN CURRICULUM

Parental involvement and responsibility is critical to successful participation in Connections Academy (CA). CA is focused on student achievement and accountability. A parent must be available to be at home with the child and to provide instruction, or must designate another responsible adult to serve as the student's learning coach. Students may NOT be left unsupervised. Connections Academy is NOT a student self-study program.

As a condition of enrollment, parents are required to sign an agreement outlining their responsibilities. Please review the sample agreement. (Some schools' agreements may vary.)

In some schools, community partnerships may be available to provide a location and a learning coach for the student.

Learning Triad  
Is this Program Right for You?  
Parent Responsibilities  
Community Coordinators

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Original URL: <http://www.jsonline.com/news/state/nov03/188840.asp>

## Virtual schools grow, learn

### Critics concerned about money, amount of student-teacher contact

By ANNE DAVIS  
[adavis@journalsentinel.com](mailto:adavis@journalsentinel.com)

Last Updated: Nov. 28, 2003

For Katie and Bailey Lecato of Grafton, the daily commute to school this year is measured in footsteps rather than miles.

Instead of wolfing down breakfast and dashing out the door to a local parochial school, the sisters - now public school students - just pull up a chair at the kitchen table and settle in for a day of schoolwork under the watchful eye of their mom.

"I would never have home-schooled if this hadn't come along," said Jennifer Lecato, whose girls are among hundreds of students around the state to enroll in Wisconsin Virtual Academy, or WIVA, the latest and largest of a new breed of public schools.

WIVA, a partnership between the small, rural Northern Ozaukee School District and K12, a for-profit education company headed by former national education czar Bill Bennett, opened for business this fall. It is one of at least six Wisconsin cyber schools that offer online learning for students whose needs can't be met in traditional classrooms.

Lecato and other parents like the flexibility of the programs and say they give them more control over the education of their children. But virtual schools are a radical departure from the traditional model of public education and have attracted many critics. The state Department of Public Instruction and Wisconsin's largest teachers union are among them.

Virtual schools operate under no clear state standards at the moment, but the DPI likely will push for regulations addressing one of the agency's most pressing concerns about the schools - the amount of teacher-student contact, according to Tony Evers, deputy state superintendent.

Online learning continues to grow. The Waukesha School District and Cooperative Educational Service Agency No. 7, a non-profit agency that provides resources to local school districts, are both interested in setting up virtual schools.

### Money matters

In a nutshell, criticism of virtual schools goes something like this: They are only in it for the money, and there is limited contact with a licensed teacher.

"We like to embrace technology and all the things it can do for kids," Evers said. "It's a red flag when school districts get involved in virtual schools for no other reason than to raise money."

Districts that use virtual programs to educate not just their own students but public school

### Education



Photo/Dale Guldan

Bailey (left), 7, and Katie, 9, work on math assignments with their mother, Jennifer Lecato, at their kitchen table. The Grafton family is part of a new online school, Wisconsin Virtual Academy, operated by the Northern Ozaukee School District. "I would never have home-schooled if this hadn't come along," Lecato said.

### Virtual Schools in Wisconsin

Some of Wisconsin's virtual schools cater to home-schoolers who don't want to do it all on their own. Others are a resource for struggling students who need to make up missed courses or for gifted students looking for advanced classes their districts don't provide. All have opened within the past two years:

■ **Appleton eSchool:** Charter high school (grades 9-12) operated by the Appleton Area School District; opened in fall 2002; about 100 students, 90% part time and most from Appleton district; funded by the Appleton district and state charter



students throughout the state take the issue of local control and "flip it onto its head," Evers said.

Under its contract with K12, the Northern Ozaukee School District is expected to receive about \$116,000 this year as a management fee for operating WIVA. That money was placed in the district's general operating fund. The district used another \$18,000 it received in rent from WIVA to set up a wireless computer lab.

Virtual schools, which enroll students from outside their host districts through the state's open enrollment or public school choice law, bring their districts about \$5,000 in state aid per student.

The amount of aid is based on the cost of educating students in a traditional setting, and some have wondered whether it may be too high because virtual schools do not have the same utility, maintenance and other costs as their traditional counterparts.

But the backers of virtual schools say the effort has little to do with making money.

Jerry Fiene, administrator of Cooperative Educational Service Agency No. 9 in Tomahawk, said his group has invested at least \$500,000 in its online high school called Wisconsin Virtual School. Although it has 230 students and is growing, the program is still in the red, Fiene said.

"We're bringing home-schoolers back into the public schools, and we think that's a good thing," said Dan Bauer, who directs the Monroe Independent Education Charter High School, a cyber school with 45 students that uses open enrollment to attract students from outside the Green County district.

Bauer, who is interested in marketing his program to students who live outside Wisconsin and even overseas, said public schools should get involved in virtual programs or run the risk of being left behind.

"If we don't do it, the private companies are going to come in and we will lose out," Bauer said.

## Teacher contact an issue

The amount of student-teacher contact, which is far less in a virtual environment than it is in a traditional classroom, is also a concern of some.

The Wisconsin Education Association Council, the state's largest teachers union, sees it as a threat and is considering filing a lawsuit against WIVA that would allege that the use of parents rather than licensed teachers for daily work with students is illegal.

The DPI also has some concerns.

"Clearly the expectation for most folks is that if (students) are taught by a teacher, they're taught by a teacher and not by anyone else," Evers said.

Nichole Schweitzer, principal of Wisconsin Connections Academy, a virtual school in Appleton, responds that it is not always the quantity but the quality of teacher-student contact that counts.

She recalls days during her time as a public school teacher when her only interaction with a student during a 45-minute class period would be to say "hello."

ratio averages 30 to 1; [Web site](#).

■ **Kiel Integrated Electronic Learning Charter School:** Charter school (7-12) operated by Kiel School District; second year of operation; no open enrollment students; 40 Kiel students, 20 Appleton students; funded by the Kiel district and charter school grants; student-teacher ratio 9 to 1; [www.kiel.k12.wi.us](http://www.kiel.k12.wi.us).

■ **Monroe Independent Education Charter High School:** Charter school (9-12) operated by the Monroe School District; 45 students including 35 through open enrollment; has own graduation requirements and awards its own diploma; funded by the district and charter school grants; student-teacher ratio 34 to 1; [Web site](#).

■ **Wisconsin Connections Academy:** Charter school (K-8) operated by the Appleton Area School District through a partnership with Sylvan Learning Systems; opened in 2002; 370 students, all but 17 from outside Appleton district; students study at home under the direction of a parent using Sylvan curriculum and a computer; student-teacher ratio about 40 to 1; funded through open enrollment aid that Appleton receives for students who live outside the district; [Web site](#).

■ **Wisconsin Virtual School:** Students enroll part time through an agreement between their districts and the school; cost per course is \$325, paid by districts that are sending their students to the school; 230 students (9-12); most students access the program while at school; school is funded and operated by Cooperative Educational Service Agency No. 9 and a state alternative education grant; student-teacher ratio is about 20 to 1; [Web site](#).

■ **Wisconsin Virtual Academy:** A charter school (K-7) operated by the Northern Ozaukee School District through a partnership with K12 Inc.; opened this fall; 455 students; students enroll in the school and the district through open enrollment and study at home using curriculum and a computer provided by K12; the district pays for the program through open enrollment aid; student-

52 to 1 and 67 to 1; Web site.

### Related Coverage

 Virtual schools: Students work at their own pace

 Section: Education

WIVA teacher Kathy Hennings, a former public school teacher, monitors from her home in Cedarburg 63 students who live everywhere from Appleton to Pleasant Prairie. She acknowledges that getting to know them primarily through phone calls is a challenge, but she also sees them once a month at outings or field trips and regularly gets samples of their written work. She also makes home visits and is always available via e-mail.

"We're dealing with families who put education first," said Hennings, who says she never worries about her students cheating or not completing their work even though she can't see them working. "You're dealing with people who are not trying to get by. They are trying to do their best."

Jennifer Lecato has regularly scheduled phone consultations with each of her girls' teachers every two weeks. Parents may call or e-mail the teachers at any time.

An advisory committee called the Wisconsin Collaborative Online Network began work this fall on developing state standards for online learning. The group, which includes legislators and representatives from the DPI, WEAC, Wisconsin Association of School Boards and several virtual schools, is expected to release a proposal in spring.

A key goal is to work together to avoid duplication of services, said Dawn Nordine, director of Wisconsin Virtual School, during a conference on virtual education last week in Wisconsin Dells. The session, the first of its kind in the state, attracted about 120 people. It was sponsored by Wisconsin Virtual School.

A DPI committee is also studying the issue of virtual education with an eye toward updating policies. Because technology is constantly changing, it will be important to develop policies that address a wide range of possibilities, Steve Sanders, instructional technology consultant with the DPI, told the conference participants.

"What is not possible today will be possible in two years," Sanders said.

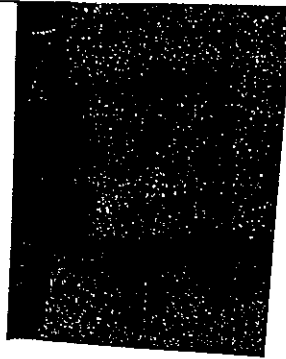
In Grafton, the Lecato girls, Katie, 9, and Bailey, 7, do very little work on their computer. Their only online lessons are history and science, and Jennifer Lecato supplements those with printed resources she buys or borrows from the library because she misses not having books for those subjects.

The girls have their own teachers and participate in a phone conference with them every two weeks. They also send their teachers samples of written work.

Jennifer Lecato enjoys spending more time with her daughters and finds working with them at home gives them more time for outside activities. In addition to their lessons, the girls are in 4-H, Girl Scouts and the church choir.

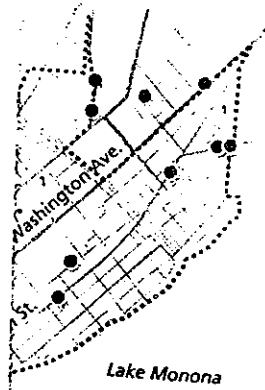
"Our year has been wonderful so far," Lecato said. "We've been very, very pleased."

From the Nov. 29, 2003 editions of the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel



JOHN MANIACI - State Journal

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State Journal



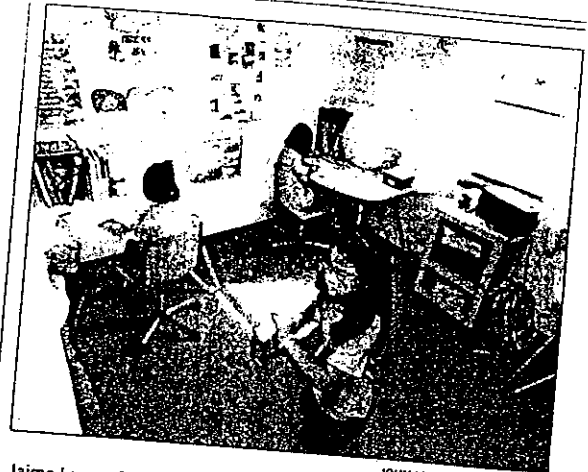
Bob D'Angelo

plore	H1	Nation	A3	Sports	F1
cal	D1	Obituaries	D6	Sports Extra	E1
ovies	G8	Opinion	B2	World	A11

cue workers. President Bush cautioned residents against returning home too quickly. "People who are safe now ought to remain in safe conditions," said Bush, who

Please see RESPONSE, Page A12

neighboring land 1841  
• About 3 million people evacuated a 500-mile stretch of the Texas-Louisiana coast ahead of the storm. Texas' governor urged evacuees to "be patient, stay put," but evacuees began heading back



JOHN MANIACI - State Journal

Jaime Leonard, 9, returns a reference book to a shelf in the home classroom she shares with her two sisters. They are public school students enrolled in a virtual charter school that is part of the Appleton School District about 100 miles away.

## Family a trailblazer in virtual charter school

They live in Sun Prairie, but the virtual school is a public school that's part of the Appleton Area School District.

By SANDY CULLEN  
scullen@madison.com  
608-252-6137

SUN PRAIRIE — Jaime, Tori and Hope Leonard wake up at 6:30 a.m. and by 7:30, they are neatly dressed and — virtually — in school.

Like children who are home-schooled, the sisters don't have to leave their house. Jaime and Tori, both 9, used their penchant for room makeovers to transform 7-year-old Hope's former bedroom into a cozy classroom with pink carpet, an alphabet border and a globe suspended from the center of the ceiling.

Their desks are topped with color-coordinated school supplies: Hope's are yellow, Tori's purple and Jaime's blue.

They even have a "school pet," a small but spirited Yorkiepoo named Joey because

Please see VIRTUAL, Page A13

Does your child have nature-deficit disorder?

DAYBREAK / I-1

Sunday Sept 25, 2005  
A13

# Virtual

Continued from Page A1

"she bounces around like a kangaroo," said Sharon Leonard, who with husband Reed adopted their three daughters from China.

But unlike home-schooled children, the Leonards are actually enrolled in a public school — a virtual charter school that is part of the Appleton Area School District about 100 miles away.

## 20,000 students

Their mother spends four to five hours a day guiding her daughters through daily lesson plans, drawn primarily from curriculum developed over the past century at the Calvert School, a private "bricks-and-mortar" school in Baltimore, where tuition ranges from \$14,000 to \$17,000 a year for its 500 on-site students.

Home-schoolers can buy Calvert's curriculum and support services at prices ranging from \$245 for pre-kindergarten to \$760 for eighth-grade.

But because her children are enrolled in Wisconsin Connections Academy, Leonard pays nothing. State taxpayers provide about \$5,745 to the Appleton School District for each of her daughters. That's the amount all school districts receive for students who live in another district and register through the state's open-enrollment option.

Principal Nicole Schweitzer said about \$3,600 of the money the school receives for each student goes to Connections Academy, a for-profit company under contract with the district. Connections Academy, which has virtual charter schools in 10 states, provides the curriculum it adapts to meet standards, along with computers, technical support, textbooks and related materials for the 465 kindergarten through eighth-grade students enrolled in the Wisconsin school, Schweitzer said. It also provides professional development for teachers and other support services.

The other \$2,145 remains with the district, and is used to pay the salaries of the school's state-licensed teachers and other services provided to students, she said.

## Must meet standards

Unlike home-schooled students, those enrolled in the state's increasing number of

virtual charter schools — currently, there are 11 — must meet curriculum standards established by the Department of Public Instruction and take its Wisconsin Knowledge and Concepts exams.

So far, the test scores of virtual school students have been comparable to those of other public school students, said DPI Assistant Superintendent Tony Evers.

Wisconsin Connections Academy's teachers monitor students' progress online every day, have consultations with students and parents every two weeks, and provide help by telephone or at the school's headquarters in a former high school in Appleton, Schweitzer said.

Students do most of their lessons using textbooks, worksheets and other traditional means. They take quizzes and tests online and send assignments to their teachers by mail.

To Schweitzer, the virtual school combines "the best of home-schooling with the very best of public school education."

"I'd be lost without the teachers," said Leonard, who had tried home-schooling before enrolling her daughters in the virtual school last year.

"Home-schooling was totally foreign to me because I was a career person," said Leonard, a former manager at American Family Insurance where she continues to do part-time consulting work in addition to working as a private nurse. "When I was home-schooling, I would buy a lot of expensive materials."

In addition to the cost benefits, Leonard said, the virtual charter school is an effective way to meet her daughters' individual needs, while giving her family time to bond and the flexibility to travel.

## Critics' complaint

But not everyone is giving high marks to the growing trend of virtual charter schools.

Critics, including the Wisconsin Education Association Council, maintain virtual schools use taxpayers' dollars to subsidize what is essentially home-schooling and reduce the limited funds available to bricks-and-mortar public schools.

Also, at least four of the state's virtual schools draw most of their students from outside the school districts they are part of, prompting claims



JOHN MANIACI - State Journal

Tori Leonard, 9, who is enrolled in the Wisconsin Connections Academy, a virtual charter school, works on her spelling while mother Sharon Leonard, helps sister Hope, 7, with her lesson.

vided for services virtual students don't receive, which Schweitzer maintains is not the case.

WEAC, the state's largest teachers union, filed lawsuits against both Wisconsin Connections Academy, which opened in 2002 as the state's first virtual charter school, and Wisconsin Virtual Academy, which opened in 2003 as part of the Northern Ozaukee School District. Both suits claimed the virtual schools violate state laws, and named DPI as a co-defendant.

In the suit against Wisconsin Connections Academy, a Dane County Circuit Court judge ruled in favor of the Appleton School District. The suit against Wisconsin Virtual Academy is ongoing.

## Concept is changing

Dan Hanrahan, principal of Wisconsin Virtual Academy, maintains the suit is politically motivated and that WEAC is afraid it will lose membership dollars if fewer teachers are needed to teach more students.

Virtual schools are raising questions about when and how learning takes place, and are redefining what it means to teach, Hanrahan said.

Technology also is changing the concept of what it means to "attend" a school from being physically present to attending long-distance, Schweitzer said.

And while virtual schools aren't the best approach for all students, Hanrahan said, they could be what enables some students to succeed.

The Leonards' two older daughters — Jaime, who was adopted in 1999 at age 3 1/2, and

4 1/2 — had attended preschool together before going to private schools for kindergarten and first grade.

"It just wasn't working out well," Leonard said. "Jaime was not challenged. Tori is a different type of learner, and wasn't really learning anything."

Hope, adopted in 2003 at age 5, needed surgery when she first arrived, said Leonard, who doesn't believe Hope could have handled being away from home for the entire school day.

"She was really shy and had a lot of adjustment issues," Leonard said. "She had been through so much in China."

In addition to learning to speak and read English, Hope had to learn how to respond to questions about the scars covering her legs, which were burned with boiling water in an accident in China.

Hope now tells other children she was "stolen by cannibals and they cooked me in a pot of stew. I escaped while they were getting the salt and pepper." To adults, she says, "It was so horrible, I don't even want to talk about it."

Tori said the teacher at her old school often had to spend time disciplining one of her classmates. "This school is more interesting," she said. "It has more exciting things and lots of fun experiments."

All of the girls are getting good grades, Leonard said.

## Numbers are growing

While enrollment in virtual schools is a small portion of Wisconsin's 870,000 public school students, the numbers are growing.

The 11 virtual charter

# 2 virtual s sued by W

The state's largest teachers union has filed lawsuits — one unsuccessful and another ongoing — against two of the state's virtual charter schools, claiming they violate state laws.

The unresolved suit was filed in January 2004 against Wisconsin Virtual Academy. Among other issues, the Wisconsin Education Association Council claims that the role of parents violates state law requiring instruction to be provided by a certified teacher.

Tony Evers, the state's deputy superintendent, said he does not expect a decision in the case until next year.

A suit against Wisconsin Connections Academy, which has since been dropped, claimed the school violates laws that require charter schools to be located within the boundaries of the school district they are part of, and that require students who opt for open enrollment in another school district to attend school in that district, said WEAC legal counsel Lucy Brown.

It also challenged the amount of money the district gets for students who attend the virtual school through open enrollment, which is the same amount districts get for open-enrollment students who attend bricks-and-mortar schools.

Joe Donovan, spokesman for the state Department of Public Instruction, which was named as a defendant in both suits, said the amount districts receive for open-enrollment students is based on the previous year's statewide average per-pupil costs for regular instruction, pupil services, instruc-

district would not be able to provide the option of virtual schooling for those students without bringing in students from other districts, Hanrahan said. The district also is using its virtual school to teach fifth- and sixth-grade history classes, as well as students who are severely emotionally disturbed.

Critics claim virtual schools are only for families who can afford to have a parent at



JOHN MANIACI - State Journal

the Wisconsin Connections Acad-  
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schools listed by DPI range  
from schools with a virtual  
component to multi-district  
consortiums that provide on-  
line courses. A 12th is sched-  
uled to open in January.

In the Waukesha School Dis-  
trict, virtual high school iQ  
Academies at Wisconsin  
opened last year with about 200  
students. It now has 650, only  
about 30 of them from within  
the district.

In the last two years, Wis-  
consin Virtual Academy has  
gone from about 370 to 750  
students K-8 students — almost  
as many as the 800 students  
who attend bricks-and-mortar  
schools in the entire Northern  
Ozaukee district.

About a dozen of the virtual

## 2 virtual schools sued by WEAC

The state's largest teachers  
union has filed lawsuits — one  
unsuccessful and another on-  
going — against two of the  
state's virtual charter schools,  
claiming they violate state laws.

The unresolved suit was filed  
in January 2004 against Wis-  
consin Virtual Academy.  
Among other issues, the Wis-  
consin Education Association  
Council claims that the role of  
parents violates state law re-  
quiring instruction to be pro-  
vided by a certified teacher.

Tony Evers, the state's de-  
puty superintendent, said he  
does not expect a decision in  
the case until next year.

A suit against Wisconsin  
Connections Academy, which  
has since been dropped, claimed the school violates  
laws that require charter  
schools to be located within the  
boundaries of the school dis-  
trict they are part of, and that  
require students who opt for  
open enrollment in another  
school district to attend school  
in that district, said WEAC legal  
counsel Lucy Brown.

It also challenged the  
amount of money the district  
gets for students who attend  
the virtual school through open  
enrollment, which is the same  
amount districts get for open-  
enrollment students who at-  
tend bricks-and-mortar  
schools.

Joe Donovan, spokesman for  
the state Department of Public  
Instruction, which was named  
as a defendant in both suits,  
said the amount districts re-  
ceive for open-enrollment stu-  
dents is based on the previous  
year's statewide average per-  
pupil costs for regular instruc-  
tion, pupil services, instruc-

tional services and co-  
curricular activities.

WEAC maintains the virtual  
school students do not use  
pupil and instruction services,  
such as libraries, or participate  
in activities, such as band and  
athletics, which districts pro-  
vide to students in bricks-and-  
mortar schools.

Nicole Schweitzer, principal  
of Wisconsin Connections  
Academy, said the school pro-  
vides a library through a sub-  
scription to an online version of  
the World Book encyclopedia,  
and provides a nurse, social  
worker and other services for  
students and parents online, by  
telephone and in person in Ap-  
pleton.

The school also has agree-  
ments with several districts  
where its students live allowing  
them to participate in athletics  
or other activities, for which  
Wisconsin Connections Acad-  
emy pays a fee, she said.

A Dane County Circuit Court  
judge ruled in favor of the Ap-  
pleton School District. That rul-  
ing found that Wisconsin  
Connections was not violating  
state laws and that students did  
not have to be physically pres-  
ent to attend the school,  
Schweitzer said.

WEAC appealed the ruling,  
and an Appeals Court judge  
sent the case directly to the  
state Supreme Court. Brown  
said it was uncertain if the  
judge would allow WEAC to ob-  
tain more information about  
Wisconsin Connections Acad-  
emy through the process of dis-  
covery, and all parties agreed to  
drop the appeal.

— Sandy Cullen

district would not be able to  
provide the option of virtual-  
schooling for those students  
without bringing in students  
from other districts, Hanrahan  
said. The district also is using  
its virtual school to teach fifth-  
and sixth-grade history classes,  
as well as students who are se-  
verely emotionally disturbed.

Critics claim virtual schools  
are only for families who can  
afford to have a parent at  
home. Hanrahan said a small  
number of his school's students  
are from low-income families.

Evers said the outcome of  
WEAC's lawsuit against Wis-  
consin Virtual Academy  
combined with other factors —  
including the recommenda-  
tions of a group of virtual edu-  
cation advisers to DPI, of which  
Hanrahan and Schweitzer are a  
part, as well as possible action  
by state legislators — will ulti-  
mately determine how virtual  
charter schools operate in Wis-  
consin.

"The last thing we want is to  
have virtual education be a way  
to publicly fund home-  
schooling," Evers said.

There is nothing in state law  
that prevents a public school

proval is needed.

### Interaction stressed

"We're trying to get our  
arms around this," Evers said.  
"I think it's important to em-  
brace technology and under-  
stand how it can help meet  
student needs."

What "gives us pause," Evers  
said, is the question of how  
much interaction virtual school  
students have with their teach-  
ers, when research supports  
that one of the most important  
variables in student learning is  
the classroom teacher.

If there is limited interaction  
between students and teachers,  
Evers said, "It's our feeling this  
won't be a good thing."

David Williamson Shaffer,  
assistant professor of educa-  
tional psychology at UW-  
Madison who specializes in ed-  
ucation technology, said the  
success of any educational ap-  
proach depends on a range of  
factors, including the quality of  
the program and teachers, as  
well as the individual student.

What is certain is that virtu-  
al schools are just one example of



Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction  
CHARTER SCHOOLS  
SUBGRANT APPLICATION  
PI-9600-P (Rev. 10-01)

INSTRUCTIONS: Complete and return to:

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION  
PAULA CRANDALL DECKER  
CHARTER SCHOOL CONSULTANT  
125 SOUTH WEBSTER STREET  
P.O. BOX 7841  
MADISON, WI 53707-7841

## Planning Phase

### I. GENERAL INFORMATION

1. School District/Chartering Authority Appleton Area School District		2. Name of District Administrator Thomas G. Scullen	
3. School District/Chartering Authority Address Street, City, State, Zip 10 College Avenue, Suite 214, P.O. Box 2019, Appleton, WI 54912-2019		4. District Administrator Telephone Area/No. (920) 832-6126	
5. Name of Proposed Charter School Wisconsin Connections Academy (WCA)	6. Planning Phase Contact Pat Laystrom		7. Planning Phase Contact Telephone Area/No. (847) 726-3937
8. Planning Phase Contact Address Street, City, State, Zip 1059 Markus Court, Lake Zurich, Illinois 60047		9. Proposed Grade Level(s) to be Served K through 8	
10. Planning Phase Contract Email Address laystrom@earthlink.net		11. Anticipated Enrollment at Opening 217	
12. If Multidistrict, List District Names		13. Anticipated Opening Date Mo./Day/Yr. Aug. or Sep. 2002	14. Amount Requested \$10,000

### II. ASSURANCES

Each participating subgrant recipient does hereby agree to comply with the following assurances:

Read and check

- ☒ 1. Subgrant funds will be expended during the specified subgrant period; the school district or chartering authority shall serve as the fiscal agent for all subgrants; standard accounting procedures will be utilized by subgrant recipients and records of all subgrant expenditures will be maintained in an accurate, thorough, and complete manner.
- ☒ 2. Subgrant recipients/chartering authorities by endorsement of this proposal assure approval of the concept of the charter school as reflected in the proposal, assure that the plan is one worth developing and expanding with the federal funds applied for.
- ☒ 3. Subgrant recipients confirm their understanding that funds for start-up or implementation will be available only if a school is chartered prior to the conclusion of the planning period. Authorization to spend funds will occur only when evidence is provided that the charter is issued and students are being served.
- ☒ 4. Subgrant recipients will participate in all data reporting and evaluation activities as requested by the U.S. Department of Education and the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, including the School Performance Report, see sec. 115.38, Wis. Stats., participation at a reporting conference, a final grant report document, and financial statement.
- ☒ 5. Subgrant recipients will expend planning funds only for the purpose of planning a charter school which is nonsectarian and which will be in compliance with all Wisconsin laws and administrative rules regarding staff certification and licensure.
- ☒ 6. Subgrant recipients will comply with federal laws including, but not limited by enumeration to, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and part B of the Individuals With Disabilities Education Act.
- ☒ 7. Subgrant recipients will comply with all provisions of the *Nonregulatory Guidance—Public Charter Schools Program* of the United States Department of Education.
- ☒ 8. Subgrant recipients ensure that the charter school will receive funds through programs administered by the United States Department of Education under which funds are allocated on a formula basis. Each charter school will receive such funds for which it is eligible.

### III. SIGNATURES

WE, THE UNDERSIGNED, CERTIFY that the information provided in the application is true and correct to the best of our knowledge.

Signature of District Administrator/Chartering Authority Official

*Thomas G. Scullen*

Date Signed

12-16-01

Signature of School Board Clerk

*Donald J. Hietanen*

Date Signed

12-18-01

Collection of this information is a requirement of Public Law 103-382, Title X: Part C: Public Charter Schools Program.

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## IV. CERTIFICATION AND ENTITLEMENT

Must be submitted for discretionary projects only. However, agencies receiving funds under any of the other grant programs must collect this certificate whenever they enter into a covered transaction with a grantee. (Refer to instructions for more information.)

## Certification Regarding

## Debarment, Suspension, Ineligibility, and Voluntary Exclusion

## Lower Tier Covered Transactions

This certification is required by the regulations implementing Executive Order 12549, Debarment and Suspension, 34 CFR Part 85, Section 85.510, Participants' responsibilities. The regulations were published as Part VII of the May 26, 1988, *Federal Register* (pages 19160-19211). Copies of the regulations may be obtained by contacting the person to which this proposal is submitted.

1. The prospective lower tier participant certifies, by submission of this proposal, that neither it nor its principals are presently debarred, suspended, proposed for debarment, declared ineligible, or voluntarily excluded from participation in this transaction by any federal department or agency.
2. Where the prospective lower tier participant is unable to certify to any of the statements in this certification, such prospective participant shall attach an explanation to this proposal.

LEA/Agency/Company Name

Appleton Area School District

Name and Title of Authorized Representative

Thomas G. Scullen, Ed.D. Superintendent

Signature

Date

12-16-01

## INSTRUCTIONS FOR CERTIFICATION

By signing and submitting this proposal, the prospective lower tier participant is providing the certification set out below.

The certification in this clause is a material representation of fact upon which reliance was placed when this transaction was entered into. If it is later determined that the prospective lower tier participant knowingly rendered an erroneous certification, in addition to other remedies available to the Federal Government, the department or agency with which this transaction originated may pursue available remedies, including suspension and/or debarment.

The prospective lower tier participant shall provide immediate written notice to the person to which this proposal is submitted if at any time the prospective lower tier participant learns that its certification was erroneous when submitted or has become erroneous by reason of changed circumstances.

The terms "covered transaction," "debarred," "suspended," "ineligible," "lower tier covered transaction," "participant," "person," "primary covered transaction," "principal," "proposal," and "voluntarily excluded," as used in this clause, have the meanings set out in the Definitions and coverage sections of rules implementing Executive Order 12549. You may contact the person to which this proposal is submitted for assistance in obtaining a copy of those regulations.

The prospective lower tier participant agrees by submitting this proposal that, should the proposed covered transaction be entered into, it shall not knowingly enter into any lower tier covered transaction with a person who is debarred, suspended, declared ineligible, or voluntarily excluded from participation in this covered transaction, unless authorized by the department or agency with which this transaction originated.

The prospective lower tier participant further agrees by submitting this proposal that it will include the clause titled "Certification Regarding Debarment, Suspension, Ineligibility, and Voluntary Exclusion-Lower Tier Covered Transaction," without modification, in all lower tier covered transactions and in all solicitations for lower tier covered transactions.

A participant in a covered transaction may rely upon a certification of a prospective participant in a lower tier covered transaction that it is not debarred, suspended, ineligible, or voluntarily excluded from the covered transaction, unless it knows that the certification is erroneous. A participant may decide the method and frequency by which it determines the eligibility of its principals. Each participant may, but is not required to, check the Conprocurement List (202-786-0688).

Nothing contained in the foregoing shall be construed to require establishment of a system of records in order to render in good faith the certification required by this clause. The knowledge and information of a participant is not required to exceed that which is normally possessed by a prudent person in the ordinary course of business dealings.

Except for transactions authorized under paragraph 5 of these instructions, if a participant in a covered transaction knowingly enters into a lower tier covered transaction with a person who is suspended, debarred, ineligible, or voluntarily excluded from participation in this transaction, in addition to other remedies available to the federal government, the department or agency with which this transaction originated may pursue available remedies, including suspension and/or debarment.

## CHARTER SCHOOL PLANNING PHASE SUBGRANT APPLICATION

### WISCONSIN CONNECTIONS ACADEMY EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Wisconsin Connections Academy (WCA) is being planned with Appleton Area School District (AASD) and Sylvan Ventures, an entity of Sylvan Learning Systems which invests in and provides support to emerging technology companies in the education and training marketplace.

The mission of WCA is to help each student maximize his or her potential and meet the highest performance standards through a uniquely individualized learning program that combines the best in virtual education with very real connections among students, family, teachers, and the community. Through its innovative partnership with the public schools, WCA serves parents, students and teachers who seek an alternative to the conventional classroom.

WCA is a "school without walls" that will ultimately serve K through 8<sup>th</sup> grade students, with a possibility of extending through 12<sup>th</sup> grade, from their families' preferred alternate place for learning—such as the home or a community setting.

WCA has already completed the following planning activities: research and consultation with Wisconsin charter school experts (including participation in charter school conference); the development of the basic school design; initial research regarding target populations; and foundational work on curriculum and technology.

With the planning grant, the following activities will be undertaken: market research and recruitment planning; contract and charter development; outreach to consortium districts; curriculum correlation and development; technology development and testing; and other planning and promotional activities targeted at preparing WCA for a successful opening in the Fall of 2002.

WCA is both "high tech" and "high touch." Instruction will be delivered to the student via a computer that has been provided at no cost to the student by WCA and configured with appropriate software, Internet connection and diagnostic tools for aiding in technical support. Additionally, the computer will be the basic organizational device for assessing, managing and tracking the student's learning on- and offline.

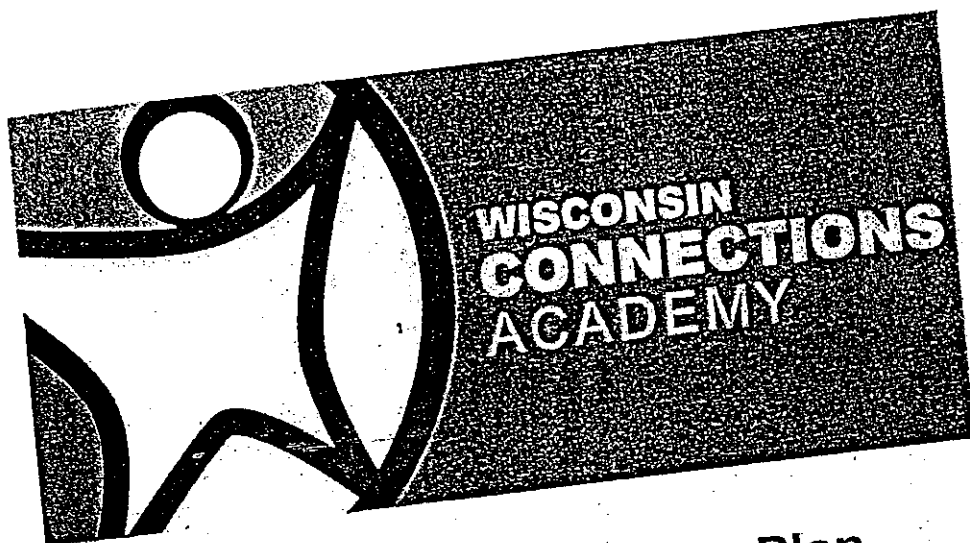
At the same time, each WCA student has adult "co-learners" committed to his or her educational achievement: a parent or other caring adult on site in the learning location, and a WCA teacher who communicates via phone, computer and other advanced technologies with the parent and student to develop and monitor a "Personalized Learning Plan." This Plan is custom tailored to the needs of the student as related to the state curriculum standards and as determined by multiple measures including WCA assessments, standardized test data, and student/parent/teacher observations. The ultimate focus of the Personalized Learning Plan will be mastery of curriculum standards as measured by the state's end of grade and gateway assessments, on which WCA students will be prepared to excel.

WCA also links each student to the online community of learners in the school and the real world community for hands-on learning experiences. Students will demonstrate their acquisition of basic skills through collaborative projects with fellow WCA students organized around areas of interest and identified needs in the community. These projects will allow students an opportunity to come together for a focused purpose that specifically relates to their learning and provides beneficial social interaction with their peers.

WCA provides an innovative approach to reaching students who are not thriving, for a variety of reasons, in traditional educational settings. By focusing on a standards-based curriculum designed specifically to meet the individual needs of students and delivered in a manner that in most cases is one-to-one instruction, WCA will provide every type of learner with an opportunity to progress to high levels of achievement at just the right pace.

Contact Information: Pat Laystrom, 1059 Markus Ct., Lake Zurich, IL 60047; 847-726-3937 office; laystrom@earthlink.net





**Proposal and Business Plan**  
for  
**Appleton Area School District**  
**Charter School Guidelines**

Wisconsin Connections Academy  
c/o Pat Laystrom  
(847) 726-3937

March 11, 2002

around the state beginning in late January 2002. More than 800 parents attended our Open Houses, and 495 Open Enrollment applications were filed with AASD as of February 22, 2002. In addition, numerous Appleton parents have contacted WCA to express interest in the school and an informational session for Appleton parents is planned for March 27<sup>th</sup>.

These parents seem to agree that Wisconsin Connections Academy is for many kinds of students whose learning needs are not well served in the typical classroom, for example:

- kids who are homebound due to illness or disability
- students in group homes or institutions
- "exceptional" children who are far ahead of or far behind their peers in school
- students whose families have opted for a home school environment
- young people pursuing artistic or athletic careers that require a flexible school schedule
- students at risk of academic failure who may particularly benefit from intensive, personalized instruction
- kids in very isolated rural areas.

While Wisconsin Connections Academy can serve a wide variety of students well, it is not for everyone. It requires a real commitment by students and their parents.

3. What will be the make-up of the enrollment?

a. What total enrollment is targeted?

The total enrollment of WCA is targeted at approximately 400 students in school year 2002-2003 to as many as 4,000 in school year 2007-2008. Applications will be accepted for students entering grades K-8 for the school year 2002-03. Although WCA anticipates having the capability of serving grades 9-12 in the future, it is also committed to exploring partnerships with local virtual high school efforts to offer the complete grade range.

b. What process will be used to enroll students?

Because WCA is uniquely suited to serving students from across the state of Wisconsin, student recruitment each year will encompass both an AASD-focused recruitment period and the statewide Open Enrollment period. WCA will always give preference in admission to a specified number of pupils who reside within AASD, as guided by AASD. In addition, WCA will give enrollment priority to siblings of enrolled students admitted in a previous year. Due to the state's Open Enrollment Program, any child qualified under the laws of Wisconsin for admission to a public school is also qualified for admission, regardless of the school attendance area where he or she resides, subject to the receiving district's approval.

*Open Houses/community meetings*

- providing multiple Open House informational sessions at various days and times throughout the Fox Cities and surrounding areas, as well as other parts of the state. (The 15 Open Houses WCA held around the state prior to the 2002 Open Enrollment period attracted more than 800 attendees.)
- providing informational sessions and posting flyers at community centers and public libraries throughout the Appleton area and in selected communities around the state

*School district referrals and outreach*

- briefing AASD and other district administrators and guidance personnel on WCA as an alternative for students who might benefit from individualized instruction in a non-classroom setting
- reaching out to other districts directly and via the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction and the Wisconsin Charter Schools Association

*Media outreach*

- participating in talk shows and providing newsfeeds to local radio and television outlets
- advertising in and providing newsfeeds to local newspapers
- advertising on and providing newsfeeds to community-focused web sites

d. How will the charter reflect the diversity of the community?

Wisconsin Connections Academy will actively recruit students from low-income families and from the Hispanic, Hmong, Native American, African American, and other ethnic communities in the Fox Valley via the marketing and outreach efforts described above. WCA will strive to have a socioeconomic/demographic balance that reflects the AASD community.

e. Will a special segment of the school population be targeted?

As described in 2 above, Wisconsin Connections Academy is ideally suited for homebound students, children in group homes or institutions, learning disabled and gifted children, home school families, professional performers and athletes, at-risk students, children in remote rural areas, and others who may seek an alternative to the conventional "bricks and mortar" classroom.

f. How will students with special needs be accommodated?

WCA is committed to serving children with disabilities whether such children are currently or newly identified as children with disabilities. Through a combination of appropriate certifications among our core Wisconsin-based teaching staff, contracts with local school districts, and expertise in our centralized education resource center, WCA will be able to meet the needs of special learners. In

In order to ensure that students are progressing through their PLPs, the WCA team will log students' efforts on every assignment and activity. This logging of student work will take place through the combination of system-monitored time spent on online activities and recording of offline activities and progress by the learning coach and teacher.

- *A flexible learning day and year.*

Because Wisconsin Connections Academy includes a combination "real-time" (synchronous) learning experiences and "flex-time" (asynchronous) activities, students and their learning coaches can structure the school day flexibly to best meet the student's learning needs. An activity originally expected to account for one hour of a student's day for three days running can be extended to three hours in one day if the task proves absorbing; conversely, a concept expected to take a week of work may be mastered in a day.

Students and their learning coaches can also call on teaching resources as needed during their flexible learning day. Their WCA teacher will be on hand during the regular school day to respond to requests as well as to consult about student progress and suggest tailored learning activities. After the regular school day, WCA's educational resource counselors are available via email, chat and phone to answer student questions, and support the learning coaches.

In addition, Wisconsin Connections Academy will employ a year-round option that provides calibrated learning resources during the summer months for families who would like to extend the traditional school calendar.

- *A complete "co-learner" team focused on each learner's success.*

At Wisconsin Connections Academy, students and their parents/guardians are not passive recipients of education but instead actively engaged and fully committed members of the learning team along with the certified teaching staff. Research (Christenson et al, Drake, Heymann) has shown that the true success of any instructional program depends on both student commitment and parent involvement, and both are essential elements of every WCA learning activity. While the learning coach may be any adult responsible for the student's care—group home staff member, community worker, foster parent, parent, or grandparent—that person's commitment to the WCA learning process cannot be compromised. The same is true of the WCA teachers and the students themselves. In addition, through group projects and interaction both online and offline, fellow WCA students serve as peer members of one another's co-learner teams. And finally, the community connection ensures that students will also benefit from involvement with mentors and community resources. (See Appendix B for Instructional Model.)

the following local measures, assessments and standardized tests to measure pupil progress under Sec. 118.01, Stats.:

- ***Ongoing Informal Quantitative Assessment:*** During each phase of their curriculum mastery, students will engage in objective assessments such as quizzes and scored exercises. Student performance on these assessments, as monitored by WCA teachers and learning coaches, helps gauge mastery and set the pace of instruction or remediation.
- ***Ongoing Informal Qualitative Assessment:*** Student progress cannot be measured simply through standardized tests, and therefore WCA students will maintain portfolios of their work in all subject areas. Teachers will review these portfolios on a regular basis, using detailed comments and scoring on the appropriate rubric to help the student and parent understand the strengths and areas for improvement in the work. The portfolio assessment becomes an integral part of the student's overall evaluation.

***Periodic Formal Assessment- Internal:*** WCA has licensed the EdVISION standards- and standardized-test correlated assessment series as part of the ongoing WCA assessment program. Administered several times during the school year, these assessments provide an "early read" on a student's ultimate performance on the Wisconsin Student Assessment System—and provide multiple opportunities for remediation.

***Periodic Formal Assessment- External:*** WCA will use external assessments both to validate student progress against outside standards and to make the school accountable to all stakeholders- students, parents, and the larger community. WCA is dedicated to meeting and exceeding all of Wisconsin's goals and grade level requirements as stated in Wisconsin statutes §118.30, Pupil Assessment. The WCA will participate in the Wisconsin Student Assessment System (WSAS). WSAS includes testing in grades four, eight, and ten (incremental CTB Terra Nova-based tests) in Language Arts, Mathematics, Reading, Science, Social Studies, and Writing. Results on these assessments will be reported publicly through the Department of Public Instruction and will be communicated directly to WCA parents. In addition, the WCA administration will use the data from the Wisconsin Information Network for Successful Schools (WINSS) website to evaluate school-wide progress and make adjustments to the program accordingly.

e. How will student progress be communicated to parents/guardians?

As learning coaches (or those who oversee a designated learning coach), parents/guardians will be intimately familiar with their child's progress on a day-to-day basis at WCA. In addition, teachers and staff will employ PLP-based progress reports to communicate students' academic achievement to students and their learning coaches. Students will also be responsible for individual self-

reflection and assessment of performance against their PLPs. In addition, WCA will participate in the annual School Performance Report (SPR).

**f. Describe how discipline will be dealt with at the school. What is the discipline plan?**

Appropriate conduct is expected of all students at Wisconsin Connections Academy. Students at the WCA are guaranteed due process of law as required by the Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution. The student's code of conduct will be explained in the school's Student and Parent Handbook and includes steps to be followed in the event of misbehavior.

Violations that may lead to suspension include, but are not limited to, the following breaches of conduct:

- **Cheating on tests or daily work:** A student who knowingly participates in copying, using another student's work and representing it as his or her own (for example, students transmitting their work electronically for another student's use), or who provides other students with test answers or answer keys, or otherwise uses unauthorized materials in an assignment or assessment situation.
- **Abusive conduct:** A student who uses or engages in using abusive language or conduct in the presence of others in person or electronically.
- **Vandalism:** A student who intentionally damages or destroys school property or records (physical or electronic). In these instances the school reserves the right to contact the proper law enforcement agency.
- **Theft and robbery:** A student who takes money or other property (physical or electronic) with the intent to deprive another person or the school of that property. The threat or the use of force or violence is considered a serious breach of conduct. In these instances the school reserves the right to contact the proper law enforcement agency.
- **Sexual harassment:** A student who subjects another to any unwelcome sexual advances including verbal harassment, unwelcome or inappropriate touching, or suggestions, requests, or demands for sexual favors.

Violations that may lead to expulsion include, but are not limited to, any behavior that indicates that a student is a serious threat to the safety of others, possession of firearms, dangerous weapons, bombs, or explosives, criminal behavior, arson, possession of or sale of controlled substances or paraphernalia. Suspensions or expulsions for children designated as exceptional follow all appropriate state and federal policies, regulations, and laws.

WCA will not discipline pupils protected under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, 29 U.S.C. 794 (sec. 504), the Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act, 20 U.S.C. 1400 et. seq. (IDEA), the American with Disabilities Act, 42 U.S.C. 12101 et. seq. (ADA) unless WCA complies with the requirements of those acts. Section 118.31, Stats., which prohibits corporal punishment of pupils, shall apply to WCA. Sections 118.32 and 948.50, Stats., which prohibit a strip search of a pupil, shall also apply to WCA.

5. [Omitted in AASD Charter School Guidelines]

6. What is the relationship with the District goals?

- a. In what manner and how often will a report on student progress in mandated State and local testing, as well as specific charter measurements, be communicated to the Board of Education and community?

Because Wisconsin Connections Academy is a charter school, accountability is inherent in our design. Specifically, we will report to the Board of Education and the community in the following ways:

- ***Student Testing:*** As noted above, WCA is dedicated to meeting and exceeding all of Wisconsin's goals and grade level requirements as stated in Wisconsin statute 118.30, Pupil Assessment. Results on mandated assessments will be communicated directly to WCA parents and reported publicly, as they are received, through the Department of Public Instruction and the AASD Board of Education. WCA will participate in the annual School Performance Report (SPR); in addition, WCA administrators and teachers will use the data from the Wisconsin Information Network for Successful Schools (WINSS) website to evaluate school-wide progress and make adjustments to the program accordingly.
- ***School-wide Performance Evaluation:*** While student progress is being assessed on an individual basis, the NAS Board and Administrator will evaluate school-wide performance, using this information to make the necessary adjustments to ensure that WCA fulfills its mission and goals. School success will be assessed according to a variety of measures, including student assessment results, parent and student feedback, and additional quantitative metrics (enrollment, drop-out rates, learning coach participation, and post-secondary matriculation, etc.). In addition, the WCA Board may contract with an outside evaluator (such as a university) to assess the school's overall performance against its mission. Results of these evaluations will be reported to the AASD Board of Directors and will be made public through WCA's annual report.

**Instructional/Staff Development**

WCA will develop a program of instruction that will be delivered by teachers employed by the AASD and by other specialists provided directly with the WCA as outlined in the charter submission. All personnel with direct contact with parents or teachers will be trained in the WCA protocols. All instructional staff employed or contracted by the AASD or WCA will receive orientation training of not less than two weeks nor more than four weeks upon hiring. In addition, continuing professional development will be provided according to the charter submission.

**Student and Teacher Services**

All students and teachers will be provided with the instructional materials as outlined in the charter submission, including a substantial text-based curriculum. All reusable instructional materials are the property of WCA or its contractor and will be returned when the student or teacher leaves the school. In addition to the print-based instructional materials, students will receive their choice of a laptop computer per student or a desktop computer per family. Students will receive a stipend equal to the cost of the monthly Internet access provider selected by WCA that will be used to purchase new Internet access or to pay towards an existing service. Students without a phone line from economically disadvantaged households will receive a stipend to purchase telephone service. The hardware configuration and software provided will be updated from time to time based on the instructional program. The initial software provided will include Outlook Today® by Microsoft Corporation, the Microsoft Office Suite®, Microsoft Encarta® and an Internet filter. The hardware and software provided will be the property of WCA or its contractor and will be returned when the student leaves the school.

**AASD-Provided Services**

The Appleton Area School District will provide Wisconsin-certified and appropriately credentialed teachers for WCA. Each teacher will be responsible for 50 students, working one-on-one and in small groups via email, telephone, online chat, and other means. Each teacher will work no more than 369 minutes per day (305 minutes per day in direct interaction with students and 64 minutes per day in planning and administrative activities relating to student instruction), with work start and end times and total work days as specified in the collective bargaining agreement between AASD and AEA.

AASD will also provide the following services:

- Preparing and submitting student reports as are required by the AASD charter and the DPI
- Operating an administrative office of not less than 1,500 square feet to be located within the Appleton school district



- Distributing and maintaining materials and supplies to teachers, including office supplies and technology tools (hardware, software, and Internet connection)
- Providing technical support and maintenance (for warranty repairs) of any computer hardware or software provided to teachers by the AASD.

**2. Describe the anticipated financial support from the District and other sources.**

As stated above, the total cost of WCA contracted services is \$3,499 per pupil, not including teachers provided by AASD. This fee will be netted by AASD from state funding for students enrolling through the Open Enrollment program, and from the usual per pupil allocation for AASD's own students. As WCA's enrollment grows, so does the accumulated retained revenue for AASD.

**3. In what manner will the financial operations be audited and communicated to the Board of Education?**

WCA will submit to all financial audits and comply with all audit procedures and requirements specified in its charter contract with the AASD Board. Within a number of days after the end of each school year agreed upon by the AASD Board, WCA will submit a complete set of financial statements including Balance Sheet, Income Statement, and Statement of Cash Flows together with full footnote disclosures in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles and using full accrual accounting. In addition, the Audit Committee of the school (made up of board members, Advisory Council members, parents and teachers) will be responsible for obtaining an independent financial audit of all of the school's financial operations on an annual basis.

March 11, 2002

## Operations

### 1. What facility will be used for the school?

#### a. What lease or purchase arrangements are made or expected?

As a virtual charter school, Wisconsin Connections Academy will not require a physical facility for day-to-day teaching and learning. Students will work from the setting of their families' choice—such as the home or a supervised community location—while teachers can work from their homes or any location with an Internet connection. WCA does anticipate securing permanent office space (approximately 1,500-2,000 square feet) for its administrative staff and to house its teaching staff on an interim basis; AASD has indicated that it will provide this space.

#### b. What ADA assurances will be made?

WCA will comply with all required inspections, laws, ordinances and regulations regarding its administrative offices.

#### c. What insurance and liability plans are made?

WCA will secure the necessary property and liability insurances for its administrative offices.

#### d. What procedures will be used to ensure the health and safety of students and staff?

Because Wisconsin Connections Academy is a virtual school, the health and safety standards that generally apply in the traditional public school format may be somewhat inapplicable in this context. However, to the extent that these general regulations apply, particularly in regards to the facility that houses WCA's administration, WCA has developed a plan for health and safety. For the administrative facility, all necessary inspections, certificates and licenses will be obtained prior to opening for the school year. Fire drills will be conducted monthly. WCA will seek guidance from local fire and safety officials to develop an evacuation plan and to ensure that the administrative facility is equipped with adequate fire extinguishers, pull stations, smoke detectors and alarms. Visitors will be required to sign in at the reception desk.

WCA will follow all applicable local and state health regulations and will require parents and guardians of all students to present certificates of Wisconsin required immunization upon enrollment. Health certificates must be presented no later than the first day the child "attends" school. Where necessary, school officials will work with families to arrange immunizations with local health practitioners. The school will file all required reports with the Wisconsin Department of Health

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and Family Services within the prescribed time. The school will maintain records of student immunization certificates, which will be open to inspection by the Department of Public Health.

In the virtual setting, students are required to provide their own lunches and snacks. When students congregate within the community, students will be required to provide their own lunches and snacks also. In the event the school decides to alter this course of action, appropriate Department of Health and Family Services officials will be consulted to make sure the school follows all applicable codes and regulations regarding food service.

**2. How will the program be administered and what structure will be used to deal with operational issues?**

**a. How will issues and concerns involving students, parents/guardians and staff be resolved?**

Recognizing the unique nature of its educational delivery model, WCA will develop a multilevel approach to address any issues or concerns of WCA community members. Under this approach, communication will be the key to resolving community member concerns. Access to instructors and administration will be facilitated through traditional and technological means. WCA will also develop, in consultation with AASD, a complete procedure for resolving issues, concerns and disputes with all members of the WCA community. (See paragraph 3(b), below, for a discussion of policies bearing on disciplinary matters). Procedures will include clear guidelines for determining which issues should be considered by the AASD school board, School Director and which require the involvement of the Board of Trustees. Procedures will also provide for a stepped resolution system for issues not satisfactorily resolved in the forum where they are originally considered.

**b. What is the expected governance structure of the school?**

The Wisconsin Connections Academy Board of Directors ("Board"), comprised of representatives from the parent, teacher, business, and social services community, governs WCA. These Board members will serve on a voluntary basis without financial compensation. When choosing the remaining board members, the founders' first priority is to ensure potential members are committed to the school's mission. In addition, the founders will evaluate the potential members' credibility and integrity within the community. Finally, the founders will consider members' professional, educational, and practical experience.

The WCA Board is responsible for ensuring that the terms of this contract with the Appleton Area School District are fulfilled. In addition, the Board will ensure that the virtual nature of WCA's charter is in strict compliance with Wisconsin's

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## Politics



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Posted on Thu, Feb. 24, 2005

### Wisconsin Weekend Package

BRENT KILLACKY  
Associated Press

**FRANKSVILLE, Wis.** - Eight-year-old Maddie Hintz needs only to step out of her bedroom down the hall and grab a seat at the kitchen table to start the school day.

Maddie, a second-grader working on third-grade material, does her learning at home in F

On a recent morning, instructor Ginny Hintz - Maddie's mother - started the day with a le contractions.

"What does isn't stand for?" Hintz asked.

"Is not," Maddie replied quickly and confidently.

At first glance, this appears to be a typical home-school setting.

It isn't - or is not, to draw from Maddie's lesson on contractions.

Maddie is a public school student enrolled in the Wisconsin Connections Academy, one of number of virtual public schools in Wisconsin.

The Wisconsin Connections Academy and the 12 other virtual school programs in the state use computers and the Internet to provide an alternative educational option.

Some schools rely heavily on the Internet to deliver lessons. The Wisconsin Connections / which is a charter school of the Appleton School District, relies on the Internet primarily to lesson plans to parents, who work with their children with traditional textbooks and work

"There is very little you actually do on the computer," Hintz said.

Hintz was home-schooling her children prior to discovering the virtual school a few years

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still offered flexibility, but also provided a curriculum, access to licensed teachers and test no cost because it was a public school program, she said. The school even provides a computer Internet stipend.

"And of course, the most wonderful thing of all, they planned the day for me," Hintz said. lessons are outlined on the school's Web site.

The accountability involved in public education remains embedded in the program - grade attendance, adequate progress and participation in state standardized testing, according to Schweitzer, principal of the Wisconsin Connections Academy.

"All of those accountability features are still woven into our school, they're just done a little differently," Schweitzer said.

The K-8 school has just under 500 students from communities all over Wisconsin enrolled Schweitzer said. Ten teachers and a principal stay in touch with students by e-mail, occasional phone calls and notes on the many assignments that must be mailed back.

"For me, it's just been so much more helpful to have someone other than their mom write good comments and the negative comments (on assignments)," Hintz said.

The spread of computer technology and availability of the Internet have spawned the growth of virtual schools, particularly at the high school level where students are adept at using technology.

"Virtual schools typically around the country are looking to double or triple their enrollment annually," said Heidi Laabs, director of curriculum and instruction in the Waukesha School District.

Waukesha opened the virtual doors on the IQ Academies this school year. The school has 1,000 students. It's expecting 500 to 750 next year.

"Kids who enter this program get School District of Waukesha content, taught by School District of Waukesha teachers and they will get a School District of Waukesha diploma," Laabs said.

It provides an option for home-school families challenged by high school subjects, student chronic illnesses, social issues or those who find it difficult to attend a traditional school, Laabs said.

The state Department of Public Instruction will pay tuition for those who chose a virtual school by the Feb. 25 deadline for open enrollment. Students have until June to make a final decision about attending.

Hintz said the Wisconsin Connections Academy isn't for everyone. It's a big commitment, but the help provided by the school.

But Hintz said that for her, it's worth it.

"The kids don't know any differently," Hintz said. "But I really do hope they look back on these years as good times and something to remember, because I sure will."



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## Semifinalists set for interviews

Wednesday, March 30, 2005

By NANCY H. GONTER  
ngonter@repub.com

NORTHAMPTON - The interim superintendent, an Amherst man who is a superintendent in the Berkshires and a Wisconsin superintendent will be interviewed by the School Committee April 12 for the superintendent's job here.

School officials yesterday released the names of the three semifinalists whose names were forwarded to the School Committee last Thursday.

They are: Isabelina Rodriguez Babcock of Springfield, who was pupil services director before being made acting and then interim superintendent last summer; John D. Barry of Amherst, who has been the superintendent of the North Berkshire School Union in North Adams since 1999; and William R. Harbron of Appleton, Wis., the superintendent of the Northern Ozaukee School District in Fredonia, Wis., since 2002.

School officials said there were eight applicants for the post. The screening committee interviewed five of them and forwarded the names of the three semifinalists to the full committee.

The April 12 interviews will take place at John F. Kennedy Middle School's community room, starting at 5:30 p.m. with Barry, continuing at 6:45 p.m. with Harbron and concluding at 8 p.m. with Babcock.

School committee vice chair Lucy Hartry said the public is encouraged to attend the interviews, although there will be no opportunity for the public to pose questions.

What will happen following the interviews is undecided. It is possible that if the committee wants to select Babcock as superintendent that she could be hired that night, Hartry said.

However, the committee may decide to hold meetings where the community can meet candidates and visiting the school districts where the outside candidates work, Hartry said.

"We'll decide after we interview if we want to pursue that," she said.

Both Harbron and Barry said they have applied for superintendent jobs in other districts.

Barry, 52, who served as vice principal of Northampton High School 1986-1989, is a finalist for the job of Hatfield school superintendent. He will be interviewed there again April 4.

In an interview yesterday, he said he is looking for a change. Barry, who served as principal of Tantasqua Regional Junior High School in Sturbridge from 1990-1999, said he would like to be a part of Northampton schools.

"It's a vibrant community and the School Department reflects that," said Barry, who has lived in

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Amherst 12 years.

Harbron, 54, a native of Ohio, said he has applied for "a number" of positions of superintendent in districts with enrollments between 2,500-8,000 students.

(His current district has 850 of what he calls "brick-and-mortar" students and 600 students who are served through a "virtual" charter school.)

Babcock, who started her career as a special education teacher in Springfield schools in 1985, came to Northampton schools as special education director in 1994. In 1999, she became pupil services director, and served briefly as acting superintendent in the fall of 2003.

She again became acting superintendent in June 2004 after then-superintendent Michael A. Cosgriff was arrested on improper gun storage charges. When he resigned in August, she was given a 10 month contract as interim superintendent.

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## School gets a virtual flood of applications

Nearly 1,000 students apply to Waukesha choice high school in which studies are online

By AMY HETZNER  
[ahetzner@journalsentinel.com](mailto:ahetzner@journalsentinel.com)

Posted: March 4, 2005

Waukesha - Nearly 1,000 students statewide have applied to attend the Waukesha School District's virtual high school, raising school administrators' expectations that enrollment could hit 750 in the school's second year.

That figure would be triple the school's current enrollment.

All of the 975 applications came through the state's open enrollment public school choice program from students who reside outside Waukesha. Under that program, state aid is transferred from the students' home school districts to the Waukesha district to pay for their education.

"We're absolutely thrilled with the response that we've gotten," said Heidi Laabs, Waukesha's executive director of curriculum and instruction, who was one of a half-dozen people who made nearly 60 presentations for the school around the state over the past month. Laabs said she was interviewed about iQ Academies at Wisconsin, as the school is called, for about 12 television broadcasts and 24 radio broadcasts as part of the public relations whirlwind.

Just because they apply doesn't mean the students will attend, however, which is why the district is banking on only about 60% of the students signing up for classes in the fall. School officials also expect to re-enroll about 150 of their current students for next school year.

If the school continues to grow, it could swell to 1,500 students by its third year, making it as large as one of Waukesha's three brick-and-mortar high schools, Superintendent David Schmidt said. Because all of the instruction is done remotely, over district-paid computers sent to the students' homes, space isn't a restriction.

"We anticipate that we'll continue to grow, and I don't think there's any limit on how large we can grow," Schmidt said.

The interest in online education is increasing nationwide, as well.

According to a study released Thursday by the U.S. Department of Education, about 36% of public school districts had students enrolled in distance education courses in 2002-'03. The Internet was cited as one of the most common ways that students gain access to such courses.

Two other virtual schools in Wisconsin that market heavily to open-enrollment students also brought in large numbers of applications for next school year - 700 for the Appleton School District's Wisconsin Connections Academy and more than 800 for the Northern Ozaukee School District's Wisconsin Virtual Academy. Wisconsin Connections Academy opened in 2002; WIVA started the following year.

But both of those schools are for students who are elementary- or middle-school age and rely on parent participation. They also can get duplicate applications, with the same student applying to both schools, making it hard to estimate fall enrollment, Connections Academy Principal Nichole Schweitzer said.

The reason applications for Waukesha's virtual school outpaced its predecessors is probably tied to its high-school status, leaders with both elementary virtual schools said. No other district in the state has a comprehensive online charter school to compete with

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Waukesha's, Northern Ozaukee Superintendent William Harbron said.

In addition, Schweitzer said, parents might be more willing to sign up their children for a cyber high school than one for elementary kids.

"There's only so many people that want to do this kind of schooling, so many parents who want to stay home and not have complete control," she said.

For as high-tech as virtual schooling is, however, Waukesha officials believe something more old-fashioned may be responsible for their school's early success - word of mouth.

At all the workshops she attended, Laabs said, it was always the favorable comments from the school's students that had the biggest impact.

One of those students was Chris Wieber, a 16-year-old sophomore at iQ whose family pulled him from Mukwonago High School midway through his freshman year.

Waukesha's virtual school has allowed Wieber to avoid many of the social and organizational problems that led to his bad grades at Mukwonago, said his mother, Marilee Wieber. And the fact that it has accredited teachers and offers a diploma will give him a chance at higher education, she said.

"I'm really impressed with iQ," she said. "He has improved 100 percent from the face-to-face school."

The reasons parents and students seek out virtual education vary. Stories such as Chris Wieber's were common among the parents who attended the school's information sessions, his mother said.

"There's a large pool out there of people who, for whatever reason, are not finding the traditional education system meeting their needs," said Tom Young, an iQ Academies science teacher who taught physics at Waukesha South High School until last year. "There are things we can do very well for students and things we can't do well."

Even though Waukesha is bringing in more state aid because of its virtual school, the district is reviewing some of its early financial projections, which showed the school could give the district nearly \$3 million by 2008-'09. Since starting up last year, the school has run into unexpected expenses, such as the need to add staff for special education and counseling, Schmidt said. The district also spent about \$150,000 to market the school this year.

Because of the uncertainty about the school, Schmidt said, the district would not be able to rely on it to save it from its budget deficits, which are projected to cause millions of dollars of program cuts in coming years.

"We've decided, administratively, we're not going to bank on things that you don't control," Schmidt said. "Banking on open-enrollment kids is risky business."

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Print Page

## This teacher reaches out

By Ann Montgomery  
Daily News staff writer

### Online students link up all over state

Tom Young has a morning routine that would make him the envy of most teachers.

The Beloit educator of almost 30 years doesn't need to wake early to get himself ready for the school day. Instead, he wanders to his basement, flips on a computer and looks over the day's lessons. He does not teach within the time limits of ringing bells or deal with classroom interruption.

But he is a sort of pioneer.

Young is the only full-time teacher at the state's largest virtual high school.

iQ Academies at Wisconsin and Young are making waves this school year as about 250 students make their way through the school's first year with full-time enrollment. Offered through the School District of Waukesha, the charter school offers classes via the Internet in every school subject except physical education and art.

"I like it. I've always been an innovator, and to be on the front edge of this is really something," Young said while sitting in a room in his West Grand Avenue home that doubles as his office.

Young came to Beloit in the 1970s to attend Beloit College. He studied education, and shortly after student teaching at Beloit Memorial High School, he was offered his first full-time teaching job in the science department. He stayed at BMHS for 16 years before taking a job at Northwestern Military Academy in Lake Geneva. When that school closed, he applied with the Waukesha School District, the same district he attended as a teenager. He spent the next 10 years teaching science at Waukesha South High School before agreeing to make the jump to teaching through the district's virtual charter school.

Young has traded the hour-long commute to Waukesha for a simple trip to his basement. With only a few text books surrounding him and a state map showing where all his students are, the educator spends his days teaching earth science, biology, chemistry and physics to about 200 of the school's students.

He explained about half of the school's students are home schoolers who have outgrown their parent's teaching capabilities.

"They're looking for curriculum help," Young said, adding science is especially difficult for parents to teach to home schoolers.



Staff photo by Mark Boxley

Sitting in his Beloit home's basement office, teacher Tom Young explains how a typical day at a virtual high school goes. Young is the only full-time teacher at Wisconsin's largest virtual high school, iQ Academies. Hanging behind Young is a map of the state showing the locations of different students who attend the school.

Others enroll in the iQ Academies because they need the flexibility. Young said some of the students are semi-professional athletes, such as ice skaters, who need time during the day to practice and would rather take classes late in the afternoon or at night. He's even instructed a few models and musicians, as well as students with disabilities.

"Virtual education is billed as anytime anywhere. The only thing you need is a computer and a connection," he said.

All students enrolled in iQ Academies receive a laptop computer, printer and Internet connection through the School District of Waukesha. Text books and other classroom materials are also provided through the school district, Young explained.

To be a part of a class, students need to simply log on to the iQ web page and find their way to the class in which they are enrolled. A 36-week syllabus is provided at the beginning of the school year, and day-by-day instructions follow. Young is available via e-mail to guide students through their studies and to answer questions. He also hosts "office hours" during the day by going online and, much like logging onto a chat room, chatting with students. The office hours are used to discuss classroom work, to allow students to see each other's work, and for Young to look over their work.

Young said using a computer and the Internet as a teaching tool is not new to him. He's been setting up and utilizing Web sites for his classes for years.

While Young is iQ's first full-time teacher, he is joined by a number of other teachers from the School District of Waukesha in teaching classes to students can take full class loads. It is possible to receive a diploma from the virtual school, with the PE credit being replaced by community service.

While the virtual school is based out of Waukesha, any high school student in Wisconsin is eligible to enroll through the state's open enrollment program.

Young noted he does not have any students from Beloit enrolled in his classes, but he does have a few students from Janesville.

The majority of students are from the Milwaukee area, but students from all over the state are enrolled in the school.

Administrators at iQ Academies believe enrollment will grow in upcoming years as word of the school spreads. They are in the process of creating a marketing plan to advertise the school, including sending the school's teachers out to share information and answer questions about the school. Young will make three local presentations this month, including at 6:30 p.m. Feb. 17 at the Fairfield Inn, 2784 Milwaukee Road, Beloit, and Feb. 12 and 24 in Janesville at the Holiday Inn, 3100 Wellington Place.

Anyone interested in learning more about iQ Academies at Wisconsin can stop by and talk to Young at one of the presentations. Information about iQ can also be found online at [www.go2iq.com](http://www.go2iq.com).

LR

## Willoughbys

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From: <info@wivcs.org>  
 To: Willoughbys <yosemite@chorus.net>  
 Sent: Monday, February 18, 2002 8:24 AM  
 Subject: Re: What Curriculum will be used for 5th Graders?

Good Morning Bret,

Thanks for your interest in WIVCS. The curriculum used for all participating grade levels will be K12. We will be offering grades K through 5th, though grades 3rd through 5th will not be available until September of this year. We plan to continue to increase 3 grade levels a year here after.

It is your choice to decide if buying (cost \$1195.00) the program directly from us or participating in a charter school would be in the best interest of your family. The charter school would allow you to receive the same curriculum, a computer, and a printer at no cost to you, but there would be stipulations, mainly three: 1) Your children would be required to take standardized test, 2) your child would have the option to skip lessons, but they would not have the option to skip the assessment test that follows each lesson, and 3) the assessment test will be emailed to the school to serve as proof that the K12 curriculum is being used.

Please feel free to contact me directly at this toll free # 866-968-7512 ex.8031 if I can answer any further questions that will assist you in making the best decision for your family. Thanks again for your interest and make a great day.

----- Original Message -----

From: "Willoughbys" <yosemite@chorus.net>  
 To: <info@wivcs.org>  
 Sent: Monday, February 18, 2002 12:07 AM  
 Subject: What Curriculum will be used for 5th Graders?

> I see that the Virtual school is up to fifth graders. My eldest is in 5th  
 > grade. But the k12 program is only produced up to second grade now and  
 > presumably third grade next year. (My second child is in second grade  
 > now.)  
 >  
 > Why should I sign up for the charter school when I can just by the program  
 > direct?  
 >  
 > Bret Willoughby  
 >  
 >

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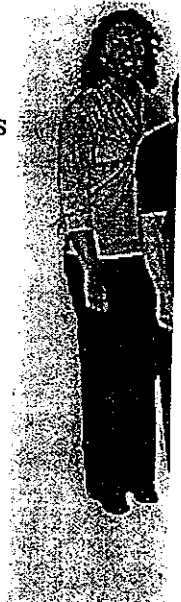
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- I don't understand how to teach equivalent fractions. Help!
- My child really loves math. How can I enhance his learning?
- Can you give me a few ideas to make geography more interesting for my ch
- My child is a slow worker, and our day is getting longer and longer. Any ad

*Pictured (from left): Kris Bryant, B.A.; Jean Soyke, M.Ed., Education Counselor; Education Counselor; Jennifer Swanson, M.S., Education Counselor; Mary-Lou S Education Counselor.*

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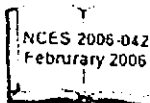
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## Homeschooling in the United States: 2003

Statistical Analysis Report



### Parents' Reasons for Homeschooling

In the earlier Parent survey conducted as part of the 1999 NHES, parents were posed an open-ended question asking them to list their reasons for homeschooling. Parents provided a broad range of reasons for homeschooling their children, which were coded into 16 different categories. In 1999, three reasons for homeschooling were the most frequently cited: 49 percent of homeschooled students had parents who cited the ability to give their child a better education, 38 percent had parents who cited religious reasons, and 26 percent had parents who cited a poor learning environment at school (Bielick, Chandler, & Broughman 2001).

While the 1999 survey was able to provide a context for why parents were homeschooling their children, it had two main limitations. First, when faced with an open-ended question, parents may not have recalled or responded with all of the reasons for homeschooling that were applicable to their situation. Second, parents were not specifically asked to report their primary reason for homeschooling. Questionnaire items in the 2003 collection were designed to address these limitations. The 2003 survey presented parents with a series of questions asking them whether particular reasons for homeschooling applied to them (table 4). Parents were then asked which of those applicable reasons was their most important reason for homeschooling.

The reason for homeschooling that was most frequently cited as being applicable was concern about the environment of other schools including safety, drugs, or negative peer pressure. Eighty-five percent of homeschooled students were being homeschooled, in part, because of their parents' concern about the environment of other schools. The next two reasons for homeschooling most frequently cited as applicable were to provide religious or moral instruction (72 percent) and dissatisfaction with academic instruction at other schools (68 percent).

Parents were asked which of the reasons they homeschooled was the most important reason. Figure 2 and table 4 show the most important reasons students were being homeschooled in 2003, as reported by parents of homeschooled students. Concern about the environment of other schools and to provide religious or moral instruction were the top two most important reasons cited. About a third of students had parents who cited concern about the environment of other schools as their most important reason for homeschooling (31 percent). Approximately another third of homeschooled students had parents who were homeschooling primarily to provide religious or moral instruction (30 percent). Sixteen percent of homeschooled students had parents whose primary reason for homeschooling was dissatisfaction with the academic instruction available at other schools, making this the third most common primary reason for homeschooling.



# Homeschooling in the United States: 2003

Statistical Analysis Report

NCES 2006-042  
February 2006

**Table 4. Number and percentage of homeschooled students whose parents reported particular reasons for homeschooling as being applicable to their situation and as being their most important reason for homeschooling: 2003**

Reasons for homeschooling	Applicable <sup>1</sup>		Most important	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Concern about environment of other schools <sup>2</sup>	935,000	85.4	341,000	31.2
Dissatisfaction with academic instruction at other schools	748,000	68.2	180,000	16.5
To provide religious or moral instruction	793,000	72.3	327,000	29.8
Child has a physical or mental health problem	174,000	15.9	71,000	6.5
Child has other special needs	316,000	28.9	79,000	7.2
Other reasons <sup>3</sup>	221,000	20.1	97,000	8.8

<sup>1</sup>Percentages do not sum to 100 percent because respondents could choose more than one reason.

<sup>2</sup>These include safety, drugs, or negative peer pressure.

<sup>3</sup>Parents homeschool their children for many reasons that are often unique to their family situation. "Other reasons" parents gave for home schooling include: It was the child's choice; to allow parents more control over what child was learning; and flexibility.

NOTE: Excludes students who were enrolled in school for more than 25 hours a week and students who were homeschooled only because of a temporary illness.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Parent and Family Involvement in Education Survey of the 2003 National Household Education Surveys Program (NHES).

# Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction School Management Services

\* \* \* \*

## Comparison of Enrollment Trends in Home-Based Private Educational Programs

	1984-85	1985-86	1986-87	1987-88	1988-89	1989-90	1990-91	1991-92	1992-93	1993-94	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97
Home-Based Public*	966	1,707	2,456	3,345	4,283	5,271	6,041	7,151	8,690	10,612	12,480	14,539	15,802
Private**	767,542	768,234	767,819	772,363	774,857	782,905	797,621	814,671	829,415	844,001	860,689	869,930	879,021
TOTAL	153,661	151,245	148,263	145,473	143,648	142,729	144,215	145,327	146,807	149,782	148,002	148,619	150,140
	922,169	921,186	918,538	921,181	922,788	930,905	947,877	967,149	984,912	1,004,395	1,021,171	1,033,088	1,044,963

Home-Based  
as % of total  
students

0.10%	0.19%	0.27%	0.36%	0.46%	0.57%	0.64%	0.74%	0.88%	1.06%	1.22%	1.41%	1.51%
-------	-------	-------	-------	-------	-------	-------	-------	-------	-------	-------	-------	-------

	1997-98	1998-99	1999-00	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05
Home-Based Public*	17,459	18,503	19,837	20,382	21,013	21,288	21,034	20,743
Private**	881,469	878,976	877,852	879,476	879,361	881,231	880,031	***
TOTAL	147,165	147,153	148,366	148,336	146,145	142,619	137,852	136,792
	1,046,093	1,044,632	1,046,055	1,048,194	1,046,519	1,045,138	1,038,917	

Home-Based  
as % of total  
students

1.67%	1.77%	1.90%	1.94%	2.01%	2.04%	2.02%
-------	-------	-------	-------	-------	-------	-------

Summary from 2003-04 to 2004-05		
Home-based decrease	Students	% change
Public	291	-1.38%
Private decrease	1,060	-0.77%
Total decrease		

Over the years, the data collected regarding public school enrollment changed. Beginning in 2000-01, total public school enrollment includes students served through public school districts, charter schools, the Wisconsin School for the Deaf, the Wisconsin Center for the Visually Impaired, Children with Disabilities Education Boards, the Department of Health and Family Services and the Department of Corrections.

Private school enrollment data includes students enrolled at tribal schools.  
or DPI private school information:

<http://www.dpi.state.wi.us/dpi/schbrv.html>

or DPI public school information:

<http://www.dpi.state.wi.us/dpi/schdist.html>

\* Due to the implementation of the Individual Student Enrollment System in 2004-05, the 2004-05 public enrollment data is not yet available.



## WISCONSIN CONNECTIONS ACADEMY

Appleton Area School District | 10 College Avenue, Suite 214 | Appleton, WI | 54911 | [www.connectionsacademy.org/wi](http://www.connectionsacademy.org/wi)

January 18, 2002

Dear Parent:

With Wisconsin's Open Enrollment period just around the corner (February 4 - 22, 2002), I am writing to let you know about Wisconsin Connections Academy – a new proposed charter school in our district. If you are already home schooling your child or are seeking a more individualized educational match for your child's learning needs, then I urge you to learn more about Wisconsin Connections Academy.

Wisconsin Connections Academy has been established to educate your K-8 child outside of the traditional classroom. This new charter school provides a comprehensive education to your child at home with you, or another adult that you designate, as your child's Learning Coach. Wisconsin Connections Academy will provide you with a computer, a complete set of curriculum materials and supplemental learning materials, as well as access to certified teachers in order to create a Personalized Learning Plan just for your child...all at no charge to you.

If your child has special talents or special needs...if you're grappling with how to balance school with your child's skating, gymnastics, or performing arts interests ...if your child is homebound due to illness or if you've decided to try home schooling for any reason...Wisconsin Connections Academy is for you.

You don't have to live near Appleton to enroll in Wisconsin Connections Academy, because this school can reach students anywhere in the state. It also offers a flexible schedule so the school day adapts to *your* individual needs.

You know your child best. Look over the enclosed information about Wisconsin Connections Academy and if it is of interest to you, follow the Open Enrollment instructions right away. This will not obligate your child to attend Wisconsin Connections Academy—it just reserves your right to enroll no matter where you live in the state. In addition, there will be informative open houses held in your area, please call 1-866-4WCA-HELP for more information.

On behalf of the Appleton Area School District, thank you for all you do for your child's education.

Sincerely,

Dr. Thomas Scullen  
Superintendent  
Appleton Area School District



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Volume 7 Number 8

March 23, 1999

ISSN 1068-2341

A peer-reviewed scholarly electronic journal  
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### Scholastic Achievement and Demographic Characteristics of Home School Students in 1998

Lawrence M. Rudner

ERIC Clearinghouse on Assessment and Evaluation  
College of Library and Information Services  
University of Maryland, College Park

This article has  
• Commentary

#### Abstract

This report presents the results of the largest survey and testing program for students in home schools to date. In Spring 1998, 20,760 K-12 home school students in 11,930 families were administered either the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills (ITBS) or the Tests of Achievement and Proficiency (TAP), depending on their current grade. The parents responded to a questionnaire requesting background and demographic information. Major findings include: the achievement test scores of this group of home school students are exceptionally high--the median scores were typically in the 70th to 80th percentile; 25% of home school students are enrolled one or more grades above their age-level public and private school peers; this group of home school parents has more formal education than parents in the general population; the median income for

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home school families is significantly higher than that of all families with children in the United States; and almost all home school students are in married couple families. Because this was not a controlled experiment, the study does not demonstrate that home schooling is superior to public or private schools and the results must be interpreted with caution. The report clearly suggests, however, that home school students do quite well in that educational environment.

By current estimates, there are between 700,000 and 1,200,000 students enrolled in home schools in the United States. Further, by all accounts, the movement has been growing steadily over the past few years (Lines, 1998). Yet, there is very little scientific literature concerning the population of home school students or even large samples of home school students.

This study describes the academic achievement levels and some basic demographic characteristics of a large sample of students and their families. While the academic levels of home school students are described in terms of public and private school norms, this study is not a comparison of home schools with public or private schools. Such comparisons would be fraught with problems. Home schooling is typically one-on-one. Public schools typically have classes with 25 to 30 students and an extremely wide range of abilities and backgrounds. Home school parents are, by definition, heavily involved in their children's education; the same, unfortunately, is not true of all public or private school parents. Home schools can easily pace and adapt their curriculum; public and private schools typically have a mandated scope and sequence. The list of differences could continue.

This study seeks to answer a much more modest set of questions: Does home schooling tend to work for those who chose to make such a commitment? That is, are the achievement levels of home school students comparable to those of public school students? Who is engaged in home schooling? That is, how does the home school population differ from the general United States population?

## Methods

Bob Jones University Press Testing and Evaluation Service provides assessment services to home school students and private schools on a fee-for-service basis. In Spring 1998, 39,607 home school students were contracted to take the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills (ITBS; grades K-8) or the Tests of Achievement and Proficiency (TAP; grades 9-12). Students were given an achievement test and their parents were asked to complete a questionnaire entitled "Voluntary Home School Demographic Survey." A total of 20,760 students in 11,930 families provided useable questionnaires with corresponding achievement tests. The achievement test and questionnaire results were combined to form the dataset used in this analysis.

This section provides descriptions of the achievement measures, the questionnaires, the Bob Jones University Press Testing and Evaluation Service, and the procedures used to develop the dataset.

### Iowa Tests of Basic Skills (ITBS)

Home schooled students in Grades K-8 took the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills (ITBS) Form L, published by Riverside Publishing Company, a subsidiary of Houghton Mifflin. Developed by University of Iowa professors, the tests were designed and developed to

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measure skills and standards important to growth across the curriculum in the nation's public and private schools.

The ITBS reflects more than 50 years of test development experience and research on measuring achievement and critical thinking skills in Reading, Language Arts, Mathematics, Social Studies, Science, and Information Sources. The scope and sequence of the content measured by the ITBS were developed after careful review of national and state curricula and standards, current textbook series and instructional materials, and research (Riverside, 1993).

All items were tried out and tested for ethnic, cultural, and gender bias and fairness prior to the development of the final form of the tests. Data on a nationally representative sample of public and private schools were collected in 1992 and used to form the initial national norms. The norms were updated in 1995 by Riverside. This study used these 1995 spring norms.

### **Tests of Achievement and Proficiency (TAP)**

Home schooled students in Grades 9-12 took the Tests of Achievement and Proficiency (TAP), Form L, also published by Riverside Publishing Company. The TAP was designed and developed to measure skills and standards important to growth across the high school curriculum. Like the ITBS, the TAP scope and sequence were developed after careful review of national and state curricula and standards, and current textbook series and instructional materials. Developed as an upward extension of the ITBS, the specifications, format, and design of the TAP tests are similar to that of the ITBS. TAP is fully articulated with the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills (ITBS) Form L (Riverside, 1993).

### **Background Questionnaires**

Background questionnaires were designed by the staff of the Home School Legal Defense Association (HSLDA). Questions were determined by reviewing the questions in previous surveys, prioritizing them, and selecting only those that were most germane to the objectives of the study. Where possible, questions and responses were made to match those used by the U.S. Census, U.S. Department of Labor and the National Assessment of Educational Progress to facilitate comparisons of home school students with students nationwide.

HSLDA designed the survey to be much shorter than previous survey instruments. They also sought to pose all questions in an objective format, rather than a constructed response format. In keeping with this approach, HSLDA worked with National Computer Systems to design forms to be computer scannable, thereby removing the need for manual data processing.

### **Bob Jones University Press Testing and Evaluation Service**

The Bob Jones University (BJU) Press Testing and Evaluation Service is the largest and oldest of four organizations providing home school families access to standardized achievement tests. The Testing Service began offering the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills and Tests of Achievement and Proficiency in 1984. In subsequent years they added other helpful tools including practice materials, a personality inventory, and diagnostic tests. In 1993, the Stanford Achievement Test series was added as BJU Press assumed the testing that the Home School Legal Defense Association had been providing for its members. Since that time, a full range of writing evaluations (grades 3-

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12) and a career assessment have been added to the growing number of evaluation tools offered by the Testing Service.

Just as home school families were the impetus behind the start of the Testing Service, home school families continue to be the largest sector utilizing the service. However, there are also a number of private schools that have chosen to use the services provided. Testing is provided for students throughout the United States and Canada, as well as many foreign countries.

The BJU Press Testing and Evaluation Service sends testing materials to qualified testers who administer the tests and return them to the Testing Service for scoring. The results are then returned to the parent. Many parents test primarily for their own information to verify that their home schooled students are progressing academically at a normal pace. Other parents use the results to meet a state testing requirement or to provide documentation when they choose to return their students to a public or private school setting.

### **Data Generation Procedures**

The following steps were followed to produce the data set:

1. Parents contracted with Bob Jones University to be administered the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills or the Tests of Achievement Proficiency (39,607 students in probably 22,000 families).
2. Bob Jones certified test administrators, many of whom were the students' parents.
3. BJU sent questionnaires and answer forms to the test administrators.
4. Tests and questionnaires were returned to BJU. BJU bundled the tests and sent them to Riverside Publishers for machine scoring. BJU bundled the questionnaires and sent them to National Computer Systems for scanning. Unlike in previous studies, the parents did not know their scores ahead of time.
5. Electronic copy of the 23,415 test results and 23,311 questionnaire results were sent to the author of this report. These sets were merged to provide 20,900 cases with matching identification numbers. In order to weight by state public school enrollment, 140 cases with missing state data were dropped. A total of 20,760 students formed the initial dataset used in the study. After we formed the dataset with 20,760 students, we asked for the remainder of the 39,607 achievement test scores. We were informed that it would not be possible to disaggregate the remaining home school students from students in private schools also contracting testing services.

### **Characteristics of Home School Students and Families**

This section provides a description of home school students and their families based on the 20,790 respondents to our questionnaire. The distribution of students by state, gender, age, race, parent marital status, family size, mother's religion, parent education, family income, television viewing, money spent on educational materials, and other demographic characteristics are identified and, where possible, compared to national figures.

#### *State*

As shown in Table 2.1, respondents came from each of the fifty states. Several states, including Ohio, Georgia, and Virginia, have exceptionally high representation given their size. This is probably due to the fact that these states require testing of home school students. To

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reduce the effects of these and other overrepresented states, the data were weighted in all subsequent analyses by the number of public school students in each state. While we would have preferred to weight by the number of home schooled students in each state, such data are not available for all 50 states (Lines, 1998).

**Table 2.1**  
**Participating Home**  
**School Students Classified by State**

State	Freq.	Percent of sample	State	Freq.	Percent of sample
AK	61	.3%	MT	112	.5
AL	181	.9	NC	972	4.7
AR	42	.2	ND	100	.5
AZ	201	1.0	NE	126	.6
CA	815	3.9	NH	176	.8
CO	810	3.9	NJ	324	1.6
CT	54	.3	NM	189	.9
DC	17	.1	NV	53	.3
DE	28	.1	NY	942	4.5
FL	860	4.1	OH	2484	11.9
GA	1547	7.4	OK	382	1.8
GU	10	.0	OR	67	.3
HI	112	.5	PA	532	2.6
IA	234	1.1	PR	8	.0
ID	28	.1	RI	32	.2
IL	451	2.2	SC	579	2.8
IN	533	2.6	SD	27	.1
KS	319	1.5	TN	322	1.5
KY	163	.8	TX	1126	5.4
LA	551	2.7	UT	35	.2
MA	343	1.6	VA	1608	7.7
MD	196	.9	VI	2	.0
ME	109	.5	VT	59	.3
MI	523	2.5	WA	787	3.8
MN	794	3.8	WI	246	1.2
MO	361	1.7	WV	92	.4
MS	25	.1	WY	40	.2

### *Student Age and Gender*

Table 2.2 shows the distribution of the respondents by gender and age. About 50.4% or 10,471 of the respondents were females; 49.6% (10,319) were males. These figures are

RS

comparable to that of the population of 3 to 34 years old enrolled in school (see U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1998, Table A-2). Some 51.4% of school enrollees nationally are male. The percentages are comparable at all age levels.

**Table 2.2**  
**Participating Home School Students**  
**Classified by Gender and Age**

	Age at time of testing (in years)											
	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
<b>Females</b>	507	879	1148	1318	1301	1248	1049	936	774	516	264	119
	56.1%	51.7%	50.2%	49.2%	52.4%	50.6%	47.2%	50.5%	50.7%	51.0%	49.3%	57.5%
<b>Males</b>	397	820	1141	1360	1181	1216	1174	918	754	495	271	88
	43.9%	48.3%	49.8%	50.8%	47.6%	49.4%	52.8%	49.5%	49.3%	49.0%	50.7%	42.5%
<b>Total</b>	904	1699	2289	2678	2482	2464	2223	1854	1528	1011	535	207

### *Student Grade*

Home school student grade placement was identified by their parents, presumably based on the grade level of the instructional materials. That grade was used by BJU to determine the test levels and used in this report as a grouping variable. Tables 2.3 shows the distribution of respondents and the nation by grade. There is a large difference in the proportions of high school (grades 9-12) home school students and the nation. Compared to the national data, a relatively small percentage of home school students are enrolled in high school. Possible reasons for this lower participation for high school students may be the relative newness of the home school movement, early graduation from high school, and possibly a desire on the part of some home school parents to enroll their children in a traditional high school. The distributional differences for students in grades 1 through 8 are minor.

**Table 2.3**  
**Home School Students Classified**  
**by Grade with Percents and National School Percents**

	Grade											
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
<b>Home</b>	7.4%	10.6%	14.1%	12.9%	12.6%	11.9%	10.3%	8.8%	5.7%	3.8%	1.6%	0.3%
<b>school</b>	(1504)	(2153)	(2876)	(2625)	(2564)	(2420)	(2087)	(1801)	(1164)	(775)	(317)	(66)
<b>Nation</b>	9.1%	8.8%	8.9%	8.7%	8.6%	8.7%	8.7%	8.4%	9.0%	7.9%	7.1%	6.3%

National data: US Census, 1997b, Table 254.

### *Student Race*

Table 2.4 shows the racial distribution of home school students in 1998 and for the students enrolled in elementary and secondary public and private schools nationally in 1994. The distributions are quite different. The vast majority of home schooled children are non-Hispanic White. The largest minority groups for home school students (not shown in the table) are

American Indians and Asian students who comprise some 2.4% and 1.2% of the home school students, respectively.

**Table 2.4**  
**Racial Distribution of Home School Students**  
**And the Nation, in Percents**

	White (not Hispanic)	Black (not Hispanic)	Hispanic	Other
<b>Home school</b>	94.0%	0.8%	0.2%	5.0%
<b>Nationwide</b>	67.2%	16.0%	13.0%	3.8%

(National data: USDE, 1996; Indicator 27)

### *Marital Status*

The great majority of home school students are in married couple families. In contrast, only 72% of the families with at least one child enrolled in school nationwide are in married couple families (Bruno and Curry, 1997, Table 19).

**Table 2.5**  
**Home School Students**  
**Classified by Parents' Marital Status**

Marital Status	Frequency	Percent
Divorced	80	0.7%
Single (never married)	44	0.4
Married	11,335	97.2
Separated	131	1.1
Widowed	55	0.5
Missing data	16	0.1
	11,661	100.0%

### *Children at Home*

Table 2.6 shows the distribution of children in home school families and families with children under 18 nationwide. On average, home school students are in larger families. Nationwide, most families with school-age children (79.6%) have only 1 or 2 children with a mean of about 1.9 children per family. Most home school families (62.1%) have 3 or more children with a mean of about 3.1 children per family.

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**Table 2.6**  
**Home School Families Classified**  
**by Family Size with National Comparison**

Home School Families		Nationwide	
Number of Children	Percent	Number of Children	Percent
1	8.3%	1	40.8%
2	29.6	2	38.8
3	28.6	3	14.3
4	18.6	4 or more	6.1
5	8.4		
6	3.9		
7 or more	2.6		

National Data: US Census, 1997a, Table 77

### *Mother's Religion*

We asked the home school families to identify the religious preference of each student's mother by selecting from a list of 27 religions. As shown in Table 2.7, the largest percentage of mothers identified themselves as Independent Fundamental, Baptist, Independent Charismatic, Roman Catholic, Assembly of God, or Presbyterian. The religious preference of the father was the same as that of the mother 93.1% of the time.

**Table 2.7**  
**Home School Students**  
**Classified by Mother's Religion**

	Frequency Percent	
Independent Fundamental	5,119	25.1%
Baptist	5,072	24.4
Independent Charismatic	1,681	8.2
Roman Catholic	1,106	5.4
Assembly of God	838	4.1
Presbyterian	772	3.8
Reformed	685	3.4
Other Protestant	500	2.5
Pentecostal	459	2.2
Methodist	420	2.1
Lutheran	353	1.7

R8

Other Christian	2,213	10.9
Other	1,572	6.2
Total	20,790	100.0%

### *Parent Academic Attainment*

As shown in Table 2.8, home school parents have more formal education than the general population. While slightly less than half of the general population attended or graduated from college, almost 88% of home school students have parents who continued their education after high school.

**Table 2.8**  
**Distribution of Home School Students and Students Nationally**  
**Classified by Parent Academic Attainment**

	Percent						
	Did not finish high school	High school graduate	Some college, no degree	Associate degree	Bachelors degree	Masters degree	Doctorate
Home school fathers	1.2%	9.3%	16.4%	6.9%	37.6%	19.8%	8.8%
Nation males	18.1	32.0	19.5	6.4	15.6	5.4	3.1
Home school mothers	0.5	11.3	21.8	9.7	47.2	8.8	0.7
Nation females	17.2	34.2	20.2	7.7	14.8	4.5	1.3

National data: U.S. Census (1996; Table 8)

### *Family Income*

National data on family income are available for 1995. As shown in Table 2.9, home school families span all income levels. On average, home school families have a higher income level than do families with children nationwide and all families nationwide. The median family income level for home school families in 1997 is about \$52,000. The median income for families with children in 1995, nationwide, was about \$36,000.

**Table 2.9**  
**Distribution of Family Income for Home School Families,**  
**Families with Children Nationwide, and**

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